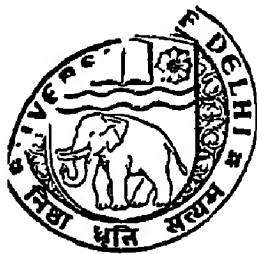


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**RISE AND GROWTH  
OF  
INDIAN LIBERALISM**



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**RISE AND GROWTH  
OF  
INDIAN LIBERALISM  
FROM RAM MOHUN ROY TO GOKHALE**

*Being the Thesis approved for the Ph. D degree of the University  
of London in Political Science.*

BY

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**RISE AND GROWTH  
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# RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

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## INTRODUCTORY

THE story of Modern India may be read either from the point of view of facts or of thoughts. There is a perpetual action and reaction of facts upon ideas and ideas upon facts. The experiences of a nation, like those of an individual, necessarily give rise to reflection; and reflection in its turn contributes not a little to the moulding of events.

I propose to study the origin and growth of Indian social thought in the last fifty years. The rise and fall of different schools of thought, the successive emergence of different points of view, the inter-relations and conflicts between these diverse schools and points of view, all this falls within the purview of this book.

There is a logical movement in ideas : thesis gives rise to antithesis; and then both are subsumed under a wider synthesis. The corrective of the one-sidedness of one theory is nearly always to be found in its succeeding theory; and thus we progress gradually to fuller and more comprehensive theories

Hence an analytic and descriptive survey tends to become

## 2 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

inherently a critical one. The sacred duty of the author is to stand apart as a detached observer of the whole drama and to let the drama unfold itself in its own way. The more objective his attitude the more likely is his success in his work. He has to transcend his personal likes and dislikes; he has to divest himself of his passions and prejudices. His preconceived views, his *a priori* notions more often become a hindrance than a help.

Such a detachment is easy enough in physical and mathematical sciences. But in social matters it is hard to cease to be oneself. It is not possible, perhaps, it is not quite desirable to eliminate the ego altogether from one's version. The author's viewpoint consciously or unconsciously dominates his whole work. It determines his selection and grouping of facts, his greater emphasis upon some factors, the relative neglect of others.

But a scientific attitude demands impartiality. In most cases personal or party bias strongly colours the whole version: and therefore we get a number of party pamphlets but very few sober histories. Indian thought has also a number of exponents; but very often the books which come out are able but biased versions, representing one narrow point of view. There we witness the heat and fervour of a lawyer out to establish his case at all costs; we do not witness the broadmindedness, the cool detachment, the anxiety to get at truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth of a judge.

The main purpose of this thesis is : first, to analyse the thought of each one of the representative schools of thinking in modern India individually; secondly, to study the inter-relations of the different schools; thirdly, to view the thought as a whole; and fourthly, to fix, to assess the value of each of these schools, from the point of view of a broader and more detached philosophy of life.

As Spinoza says: " When I applied my mind to politics, so that I might examine what belongs to politics with the same

## CONTENTS

### 11. Economic Reform

- (1) Relativity of the Economic Doctrine: Indian Economies.
- (2) Indian Poverty—Its Causes. Commercial Drain.
- (3) Indian Poverty. Political Drain. Military Expenditure.
- (4) Ruralisation of India: The Case for State Help.
- (5) The Case for Protection.
- (6) The Swadeshi Movement.
- (7) Weaknesses of the Situation.
- (8) Necessity for Industrialisation.

### 12. Constitutional Reform

- (1) Failure of Bureaucratic Rule.
- (2) The South African Agitation.
- (3) The Fight for Representation in Government.
- (4) Objections to Representative Government in India answered.
- (5) The Case for Self-Government.
- (6) The Goal. Swaraj within the Empire.
- (7) The Liberal Ideal.
- (8) The General Limitations of the Existing System.
- (9) Morley-Minto Reforms.
- (10) Communal Electorates.
- (11) Freedom of the Press, of the Platform, and of Association.
- (12) Morley-Minto Reforms: Further Criticism.
- (13) Movement for Responsible Government.
- (14) The Congress-League Scheme.

### 13. General Survey.





their own way. There is thus a clash of opposite theories; and eventually we pass on to a fuller statement in a new theory which takes into account the essential truth in each of the previous rival theories and temporarily occupies the whole field.

I do not take the Protagorean view of truth and say that there are as many truths as there are thinkers; and each thinker is perfectly right from his own point of view. Truth must be assumed to be one and essentially objective; but its nature is complex; and it therefore appears different to different thinkers. It is the task of the author to look at truth first as it appears to each of the great representative systems of thought in India, and then finally, to look at it steadily, critically, impartially as a whole, and to sum up objectively India's position as far as possible.



**THE BACKGROUND:**  
**FUNDAMENTAL FACTORS IN INDIAN HISTORY**



# THE BACKGROUND :

## FUNDAMENTAL FACTORS IN INDIAN HISTORY

### I. THE BIOLOGICAL FACTOR.

It is clear that the national mind—which is merely the minds of the individuals grouped in a particular way and working in a particular direction,—cannot be treated, any more than the individual mind, in the Lockian fashion, as a *tabula rasa* a blank tablet, on which we can write anything we like. It is conditioned by two factors: heredity and environment. But certain it is that in a sense and to some extent, the national mind is a natural datum; it cannot be made into anything or everything. This biological factor in a people's composition we may call "race." It is the material stuff, the primordial substance of a people.

The Indian people is a composite ethnic product made of four main types: (a) the Indo-Aryan; (b) the Dravidian; (c) the Scythian; and (d) the Mongol. The Turko-Iranian race is mainly to be found in the North-West Frontier province; while the remaining types are to be found more or less pure or mixed all over India. The Indo-Aryan is to be found mostly in the north, while the Dravidian element is prominent in the South. Indian history is a record of a series of waves of immigration from the North: the Aryan, the Hun, the Bactrian, the Scythian, the Tartar, the Afghan, and the Mongol. The latest and most important immigration is from the sea; but the Europeans do not propose to settle here.

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## 12 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

### 2. A LAND OF CONTRASTS.

The second important factor which goes to the making of a nation is its environment. In considering the present nature of our national character and its future possibilities, attention, therefore, is to be given to the historical and traditional factors in the situation as they have come down to us from the remote past.

The first fact which impresses itself upon the mind of the observer is the phenomenon of diversity. India is a house of many mansions. The contrasts in her climate: the variety of her flora and fauna: the multiplicity of her races, languages, religions: the infinite diversity of social customs in the matter of marriage, dinner, dress, manners: the gradation of various levels and stages of culture: these lend a peculiar picturesqueness to the Indian scene.

India stretches from north to south over two thousand miles, and from east to west over nearly one thousand nine hundred miles. She covers  $28^{\circ}$  of latitude and  $40^{\circ}$  of longitude. There are places which are quite arid deserts: and the minimum of rainfall is three or four inches: while there are other places where rainfall is seven or eight hundred inches in a year. The amazing variety of climates is matched by an equally striking variety of her flora and fauna, and by an even more striking variety of her peoples.

I have already noticed the racial contrasts: everywhere we encounter contrasts in pigmentation and facial characteristics. The same fact of contrast comes out vividly in the multiplicity of languages. People speak nearly 200 distinct dialects, all belonging to four great families of human speech the Munda or Kolarian, the Dravidian, the Indo-Aryan, and the Indo-Chinese. The Dravidian languages—Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese, Malayalam—are spoken by nearly 60 millions of men in the south. The Indo-Aryan languages, Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati,—are spoken by nearly three-fourths of the Indian population.

## FUNDAMENTAL FACTORS IN INDIAN HISTORY 13

There are followers of many world religions in India; but the large majorities of the people are Hindus; a substantial part of the population follows Islam; while there are thousands of followers of Sikhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and a number of Jews.

The particularism of Indian life comes out equally prominently in the number of Native States. These nearly seven hundred principalities lend a peculiar charm to the Indian political scene. India—except on a few occasions when a paramount power asserted itself—is always full of small states which are compared “to a swarm of free, mutually repellent molecules, in a state of incessant movement, now flying apart, and again coalescing.”

Indian society is divided into a number of castes and sub-castes; and we do really witness “an ethnologic pageant epitomising the gradual growth of civilisation through centuries of time.”

India is thus a veritable “museum of cults and customs, creeds and cultures, faiths and tongues, racial types and social systems.”<sup>1</sup>

No wonder then that some observers are honestly struck by the fact of diversity and contrast in this country. Hence we find many European writers describing India as a geographical expression, a collection of countries or a continent. Sir John Strachey even went further and said that the first thing to realise about India is that there is no such country at all.

### 3. FUNDAMENTAL UNITY OF INDIAN CIVILIZATION.

If most of the European scholars are lost in the immensity of the country and the variety of her climates, races, religions, and languages, most of the Indian and some of the European scholars are equally impressed by the underlying unity of India. The diversity is apparent and strikes one at once; the unity is deeper and reveals itself only to the eye of a shrewd observer and thinker. Indian history appears to be a record of conflicts, and battles, and wars on a common theatre; but it is really the



## 14 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

history of a single civilisation, of a single cultural entity called at one time Aryavarta or Bharatvarsha, and at another time, India or Hindustan. Even a sceptical observer like Risley or a critical thinker like Sir Vincent Smith has admitted it. "Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social type, language, custom and religion, which strikes the observer in India.....there is a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin."<sup>2</sup> (Risley) The civilization of India "has many features which differentiate it from that of all other regions of the world, while they are common to the whole country, or rather continent, in a degree sufficient to justify its treatment as a unit, in the history of social and intellectual development."<sup>3</sup> (Smith)

In what sense then is India one ? There are many kinds of unity, and of each kind there are various degrees

There is in the first place, an unmistakable geographical unity. India is marked out by nature to be a clear-cut region; the barriers which divide her from the outside world-the lofty ranges of mountains on the one side, and the vast sea on the other-are more real than any which separate any of her parts from each other. Chisolm supports this view; "There is no part of the world better marked out by Nature as a region by itself than India, exclusive of Burma. It is a region indeed full of contrasts in physical features and in climate, but the features that divide it as a whole from surrounding regions are too clear to be overlooked."<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, there is an equally clear cultural unity. India is predominantly Hindu India, and the cultural oneness of Hindu India is established beyond a shadow of doubt. There is a common sacred language, the Sanscrit; a common religious literature; a common body of laws. The institution of pilgrimages was one of the most important unifying agencies throughout the ages. Thus a common consciousness was maintained even in those days of slow and ineffective communications. Great saints and scholars used to roam about the whole country, preaching a common faith, and spreading a common religious atmosphere.

It is true that the absorbent power of Hinduism has met two checks—one from the Muslim and the other from the European. The Hindus wrote *Allopanishad* and tried to incorporate the Muslims into their fold; but the strong anti-polytheistic and anti-idolatrous attitude of Islam and also the superiority complex of a conqueror's mentality have prevented this fusion.

But although there has been no fusion, each community has exercised a certain amount of influence over the other; and as a result of it, we are now evolving a more composite unity in India

Thirdly, we have attempts at an administrative and political unification from time to time, with more or less success. The ideal of a *chakravartin*—an all-India emperor was always there, firing the ambition of aspiring rulers like Yudhishtira, Chandragupta, Asoka, Samudragupta and Harshavardhan. The Muslim—the Pathans first and then the Moghuls—also tried to bring the whole of India under one rule; and they came very near this ideal under Akbar and Aurungzeb. But it was reserved for the British to achieve the hegemony of the continent.

Fourthly, we have attempts at genuine national unification made by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of men like Dadabhai Naoroji and Mahatma Gandhi

#### 4. THE GEOGRAPHICAL FACTOR.

The physical environment is one of the most important factors in the shaping of national character. Man is a child of nature; and he is dependent to a very great extent upon nature. The land, its size and shape, its coasts and frontiers, its resources and their distribution, its rivers and mountains and forests, and its climate, together make up his outer physical environment.

The vastness of India and her immense population make for division rather than unity. The history of such a country is bound to be very intricate one; its development is expected to be

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## 16 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

a slow and tortuous affair.

India's bountiful nature easily supplied man with all the necessities of life, and gave him that leisure, that freedom from economic worries, which was a favourable condition for the growth of literature, arts, philosophy.

It may be that this very munificence has proved to India not only her blessing, but also her curse. It made phenomenal progress possible in the beginning, but it made continuous progress difficult by making man slow and inactive.

In the same way her climate could be also equally favourable or reverse. It is generally more equable than in Europe or Africa for example; and this also made plain living and high thinking possible by enabling man to reduce his wants. But the high temperature prevailing in the plain combined with humidity certainly lowers people's vitality, produces a sort of laziness, makes them less fit for the arduous work of life, and renders them easy victims of tropical diseases like malaria, plague, and hook worm.

Buckle has remarked that everything in the East is on a large scale, the lofty mountains, the giant rivers, the vast forests, the cataclysmic storms and floods; all this produces a sort of helplessness in man, and makes him an easy victim of external tyrannies, whether of nature or man.

An agricultural country like India is dependent for her prosperity upon the regularity of her rainfall. But rainfall in India is rather irregular; and this erratic factor of climate exposes the country again and again to failures of harvests and consequent famines.

Forests, rivers, and mountains have also played a great part in the shaping of the Indian mind. The *ashramas* or hermitages of the Rishis were virtually forest universities. In these solitudes remote from the haunts of men, dependent for existence

on the spontaneous gifts of nature, the ancient sages surrendered themselves to Nature and to God and developed that sense of the infinite and the pantheistic temper which has been India's lasting possession.

##### 5. LIMITATIONS OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL FACTOR.

It is easy therefore to deduce the peculiar Indian easy-going temperament and even the relative absence of economic efficiency, the lazy submission to tyranny and the want of scientific aptitude of the Indian people, from geographical facts. The fact is that the physical environment is certainly not a given, constant unalterable sum of forces, determining a people absolutely from without. If it is true that the environment makes man, it is at least equally true that man makes his environment. The physical factors influence a man by entering into him and becoming a motive of action. This fundamental fact of mind completely refutes the theory of geographical determinism. Like the flora and fauna of a place, man is a part of nature; but he can react upon his environment, while a plant or an animal cannot. The geographical environment merely gives a people a series of possibilities, any one of which may be selected or developed at any moment of their history. As society progresses, the human factor asserts itself more and more.

It is therefore dangerous to make predictions about a people on the basis of such geographical facts. Montesquieu's proposition that climate is the cause of the immutability of religion, morals, manners, and laws of oriental countries is receiving slow but sure refutation at the hands of time. It is the same with Macaulay's observation that wherever banana grows, there is usually little civil liberty. A nation's history cannot be deduced from a few geographical facts in this summary fashion. The geographical environment merely means a series of opportunities and a series of handicaps. It is for the genius of a people to overcome these handicaps as far as possible by art and science, and to take as full an advantage of its opportunities as it can.

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## 18 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

In India it must be confessed that man in the past has sadly neglected the use of Nature's gifts. Nature has made the country one and undivided, capable of being economically self-sufficient and politically independent. Her natural boundaries give her a sort of external unity in relation to the rest of the world; and the strong natural fortresses could have been made use of to protect her liberty against the outside world. The irony of it is that endowed so favourably by nature, for the realisation of oneness and autonomy, she has stubbornly refused to be one and independent. "The history of India is a continuous and complete denial of its geography."

But the tropical luxuriance of the climate has proved fatal to the manly and hardy qualities of every people that has settled down in it. The Hindus gave way to the Pathans, and the Pathans gave way to the Moghuls, and their place is taken by the hardy islanders from a colder place.

Marked out by Providence to be one of the richest countries of the world, she has chosen to be one of the poorest. Endowed by nature with every article of use and luxury, she has chosen to remain a hewer of wood and drawer of water, a dependent in her own house. India has been thus the victim not of a geographical fate, but of her own inertia.

### 6 LIMITATIONS OF THE BIOLOGICAL FACTOR

Neither territory nor race, neither the physical nor the biological factor is a rigid determinant of a people's destiny. Yet we are asked by Mr. Curtis to believe that the peculiar racial composition of the Asiatic peoples in general debars them from attaining true independence. As Shastri says: This is a revival of the doctrine of caste, without its spiritual sanctions.

Now race is more or less a mysterious factor, and the precise laws about it are not known. The fusion of races may as well make for progress and prosperity; it is not necessarily a

## FUNDAMENTAL FACTORS IN INDIAN HISTORY 19

handicap in our way. The contact of different races is often a fruitful source of new ideas and new culture. The heterogeneity of the composition of the Indian people does not in any way conflict with their essential aspirations.

There is nothing in the primordial stuff of which the Indian people are made, which makes them unfit for free and unfettered growth in economic or political sphere. The Hindus as well as the Muslims in the past had been founders of empires. The truth is that the idea of race has proved mischievous in the hands of designing imperialists. In the present state of our knowledge, it is rash to lay down any precise relation between race and culture. No race has a monopoly of certain moral, intellectual, or physical qualities. No race always connotes a certain set of immutable psychological characteristics. No race probably represents one single pure stock; and the precise nature of its composition and the relative value of the various strains which have entered into it cannot be exactly known. The surprising development of the Japanese first, then the Turk, and now even the Negro has upset the calculations of these race-purists. As Jean Finot says in *Race Prejudice*: "The history of civilization is only a continual come and go of peoples and races. All, without distinction of their biological characteristics, are summoned to this great struggle for life wherein we fight for human progress and happiness. All the ethnical elements can take part in it, all can contend for places of honour in it. Such is the general import of our biological and psychological equality, which remains intact underneath all our superficial divisions."<sup>6</sup>

### 7. MAN—CREATOR AS WELL AS A CREATURE.

The character of a people is not a fixed, rigid thing, given once for all. It is neither the outcome of the outer environment nor of pure heredity. A people, by thought, has been able to modify its racial composition, and its geographical environment. If the mind of man has been able to mould these basic material factors often to its ideas, it is even freer with regard to

its social and political institutions, its religious and philosophic ideas. These constitute the spiritual superstructure of a people, "connecting all the members of a national community by ties and connections as fine as silk and as firm as steel."

These great things are the creations of a people; but they are the creators of that people also. Man builds up a system of law and government; and this system of law and government then reacts upon him. In them, to a very great extent, the deep and abiding national traits of a people are reflected. The present character of people and its future character are inevitably linked with its past: and although character is never completely fossilised and there may be always surprises in store for us, no people can altogether shake off its past.

It is, therefore, very important to inquire what is the exact nature of the religious, philosophical, and social heritage of the Indian people and the part it is likely to play in the shaping of their national present and future.

### 8. THE HINDU PHILOSOPHIC OUTLOOK.

There are two great social and religious systems which have come down to us from the past: Hinduism and Islam. India has a population of nearly 350 millions, out of which about two-thirds are Hindus and about one-third are Muslims. The medieval economic and political system is common to both; while the two systems differ very much as regards some of the fundamentals of life; although this opposition is considerably toned down by the inevitable influence, for good or evil, exerted by each upon the other, during a period of common stay in the same country, for nearly a thousand years.

It has been said by Max Muller that the Hindus are a nation of philosophers. Religious and philosophic ideas are universally operative in the daily life of an ordinary man in India to an extent which would surprise a European. The huge dimen-

sions of nature, and its large-scale operations in India must have soon developed a sense of vastness, immensity, infinitude. Fortified against earthly cares and worries by a generous Providence, man's mind abandoned itself and even lost itself in the vastnesses of nature. The eternal puzzles the "whence" and the "whither" of man, the "how" and the "why" of the Cosmos began to trouble and agitate the reflective, wondering soul of man. Man wedged in between an infinite God and an infinite nature lost his balance and became soon merged in the infinite. No wonder that life here and now ceased to be a scene of joyful activity and play and became a mere moment, an episode in an eternity of existence, with an infinite series of past lives after and an equally endless series of future lives before. Man looks before and after; but that before and after in the case of the philosophic Hindu is a very long before, and a very long after. Man's activity which is normally interpreted as the expression of his fundamental impulses leading him on to the satisfaction of his desires and the fulfilment of his aims,—is now regarded as the forging of fresh chains which bind a man to earthly existence. Freedom becomes the one end and aim of all living; and freedom means freedom from *samsara*, the great series of births and deaths in which we are all implicated. Life is merely an opportunity to get rid of life. Time is merely a ladder by which we rise to timelessness. Life ordinarily means striving and striving means bondage. To get rid of bondage we must stop activity; and to get rid of activity, we must suppress all longings, all desires.

Such is the essence of Buddhism; and it was the philosophic Hinduism at one period. The antithesis of the One and the Many, of the Infinite and the Finite may appear meaningless to a layman: but the irony of it is that man's age-long effort is to find a way through the mazes of this controversy, which is not merely an academic one to these peoples, but the very matter of life and death. The old Eleatics like the Hindus argued in the same fashion: If the one is real, how can the many be real? If the infinite is real, asks the Hindu, how can the finite be real?



## 22 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

Only the infinite can satisfy the infinite hunger of man; there is no happiness, the Upanishads say, in the finite.

The doctrine of *Karma* the application of the causal law to human acts and their consequences, soon developed into the doctrine of *kismet* or fate, under the influence of the above theory. If the events of this world have no importance, if all life, all apparent reality is a mere illusion, if the past deeds of our past lives inevitably lead us on from one act to another, one life to the next, what is the use of exerting ourselves? The spirit of resignation soon takes possession of the mind of man and makes him a silent, helpless spectator of the comedy or tragedy of his national existence enacted before his very eyes.

“ The East bowed low before the blast  
In patient deep disdain;  
She let the legions thunder past,  
And plunged in thought again.”

### 9. CASTE.

The most characteristic social institution of the Hindu is caste. Caste is partly, at any rate, the expression of the above outlook on life, which pictured existence as a round of miseries, to be acquiesced in rather than to be fought against and therefore considered all effort for betterment of our lot here as meaningless. Man's birth in a particular group or family is not a mere accident; it is the outcome of his past *karma*. What is the use, therefore, of rebelling against the operation of destiny?

Caste determines a man's profession, his marriage, his social position, his destiny. No effort, no capacity, no aptitudes would be of any avail to enable a man to go from one caste to another. Mutual exclusiveness - the spirit of don't-touchism is the very essence of caste. Complete rigidity characterises the system.

Hindus are divided at present into nearly 3000 watertight

compartments. Originally caste-system might be an attempt to fuse different races-the conquerors and the conquered-without obliterating or affecting the essential characteristics of the ruling race. Later on it might receive extension in the interests of the principle of division of labour and the resulting individual and social efficiency. Thus we have race castes, and functional castes and sectarian castes.

This great organisation may have been instrumental in developing a certain specialisation in learning, arts, crafts, military science. It was certainly responsible for the perpetuation of the Hindu social system, by the resistance it offered to outside influences. It certainly represents a social ideal and enables the members to form an effective organisation which punishes the recalcitrant, helps the poor and the needy, and keeps alive a certain communal spirit among them.

But in its present degenerate form, it has proved a veritable curse of Indian life. It fosters division and consequent petty-mindedness. It has given us an aristocracy of birth not of merit. It has rendered the free adaptation of individual talent and capacity to particular social work for which it is best fitted, impossible. It has stifled initiative, self-confidence, and the spirit of enterprise. It prevents the growth of a nationality and the development of a democratic State. It has created the untouchable problem. It may have encouraged a certain resignation and peace of mind, but this peace has been the peace not of life, but of death.

#### 10. FAMILY.

Another characteristic institution of the Hindus is the joint family. This institution also brings out the typical merits and demerits of our social organisation. It is a family "joint in food, worship, and estate." It consists of a body of kinsmen, who dwell under the same roof, hold common meals, offer common worship, and own and enjoy property in common. The elder member exercises the right of management as the representative of the

family and administers the property as its accredited agent, for the common good of the family.

Now such a family, like the caste, represents a small communistic society, where the ideal of every man or woman, according to his or her needs, prevails to some extent. The ideal of co-operation, of solidarity, of each for all and all for each, of the strong helping the weak, the young protecting and respecting the old, the old guiding and training the young, and all offering a common front to the good and the evil which the world may have in store for them is undoubtedly a noble ideal. Under the operation of this ideal, the unchecked reign of competition with its inevitable tendency to send the weak to the wall is modified. The family protects the young wife, the helpless orphan, the decrepit old parents. The family is thus a mutual assurance society. It enables old healthy traditions and the culture of the departing generations to be successfully embodied in the rising generations, and thus ensures the perpetuation of the hereditary skill, learning, trade and business secrets. A joint family is, above all, favourable to the ideal of agricultural production as well as other rural home industries.

But there is the other side to the shield. It was an excellent institution under the old conditions of living. But when the bonds between man and man are relaxed, when the spirit of sweet reasonableness deserts the family, then it ceases to be an organic union with a common animating spirit and life behind, but a mere conglomeration of atoms. It is then that we find the Hindu home to be a scene of distractions, wranglings, confusion. It is then that the idlers become mere drones, and the unproductive class a mere drag on the family. It is then that the unchecked growth of population which it encourages brings on poverty and starvation. It fails to nourish and strengthen and develop the best that is in each; and each becomes a barrier to the other's growth and advancement; and the result is all-round stagnation. Individual initiative, personal energy, freedom to shape one's own destiny: these are the mainsprings of economic and social prosperity

of an individual as well as a nation; and the institution which tends to crush these native springs of life in man and society has undoubtedly outlived its usefulness and is therefore doomed to eventual disappearance.

## II. VILLAGE COMMUNITIES.

Indian institutions in the medieval period were all designed, more or less, to perpetuate the old order and to resist all outside influences. Caste, the joint family, and lastly the village community were all so many outer defences of the Hindu community against adverse influences. The basis is common blood in the first two cases; but the village community is united by a tie of a common place and therefore common interests. The village was a self-sufficient and autonomous economic and social unit.

India is an agricultural country. Directly or indirectly nearly eighty per cent of the population is dependent for its existence upon agriculture. India means above all Village India. There are hardly 750 towns with a population of ten thousand, and less than 30 towns with a population of 100,000 and upwards, in such a big country.

In this primitive community production was for use and not for profit. The farmer used to grow all the food necessary for the village population. From him each of the artisans—the carpenter, the smith, the barber—received his traditional share of grain. The system of barter prevailed; there was no money economy. From generation to generation, life used to move on in these isolated communities in the self-same fashion, largely unaffected by the political vicissitudes of the country.

Sir Charles Metcalf's description seems to be quite correct. "The village communities are little republics having nearly everything they want within themselves; and almost independent of foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts.

## 26 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

This union of the village communities, each forming a little state in itself.....is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence "

### 12. ISLAM

The growing particularism of the Hindu social life, born of the spirit of caste made the Hindus an easy prey to the first great onslaught from Islam. The Hindu could not translate the cultural unity of India into a concrete, lasting political organisation. The Muslims had one superb advantage over the Hindus; they were a casteless community. The faith of the Muslim is a simple faith which can very easily be understood by the masses. Islam had much in common with Hinduism; yet their social systems were quite distinct from each other. In Islam all men are equal; in Hinduism, we meet with endless divisions and sub-divisions each one cut off from the other by rigid, impassable barriers. Islam was a fiercely monotheistic religion; Hinduism tolerated and even encouraged the worship of numberless gods and goddesses. Islam stood for a pure worship of the One; Hinduism set up images and representations of gods and goddesses everywhere.

Under the circumstances, there could be no genuine amalgamation between the Hindus and the Muslims. The greatest of the Muslims-Akbar-tried to weld together the two communities; but he failed. The times were not ripe for a genuine unification between these great communities. But if a genuine unification could not be effected, the arbitrary unifications of the type attempted by Aurungzeb were foredoomed to failure. Every such attempt was immediately followed by a tremendous reaction; and society went into greater disintegration than ever.

### 13. GENERAL SURVEY

Such is the history of India and its social life in a nutshell, before the advent of the British. The causes of failure of both the Hindus and the Muslims were many; but the fundamental cause was

the absence of a genuine spirit of nationality. The Mahratta Empire went to pieces for the same reason. The attempt at establishing a purely Hindu empire was rather belated. The Muslim tried to swallow up the Hindu; but he could not. Culturally Hinduism always remained a very powerful force. The Hindu tried to swallow up the Muslim; he was perilously near the success; but in the mean time a Power with a broader ideal behind it had entered the Indian scene. The lesson of Indian history is very plain. India during all these ages is demanding unity and is ready to offer her all to the power which gives her unity. The Hindu tried and failed; the Muslim tried and failed; will Britain *really* succeed when the greatest indigenous attempts have failed?

The vastness of the country, the multiplicity of its population, the influence of a hot climate, the spirit of Hindu Philosophy with its doctrines of Karma and the illusory nature of the world, the exclusiveness and rank particularism of the caste system, the isolation and backwardness characteristic of an agricultural population, the multiplicity of languages, religions, social customs, the standing antagonism between the high caste and low-caste, the Brahmins and non-Brahmins, the age-long conflict between the Hindu and the Muslim; these are some of the forces which make for division, for discord. They are the centrifugal forces of Indian life; they make the task of a real and lasting unification exceedingly difficult.

But they do not make it impossible. The geographical factor has been and can be successfully fought. The effective communications of the twentieth century have reduced the power of distances; and the new forces which are at work for more than a hundred years in India have completely altered the whole situation. The great experiment in this vast laboratory of political and social science has begun; and its success will depend upon the capacity of the Indian mind to face facts squarely and to rise to the full height of its great opportunities.

The influence of religion and philosophy in making the

Hindu a docile puppet in the hands of foreign powers is grossly exaggerated. The Hindu religion and philosophy laid down four great aims of human life: Dharma ( duty ), Artha ( wealth ), Kama ( desire ) and Moksha ( salvation ). The Hindu was never asked to sacrifice his all at the altar of eternity. He had to go through three stages of life—the student's, the householder's, the retired man's—before he could become a *sannyasin*. The qualifications laid down for even the study of the Vedanta—the highest philosophy of the Hindus, were so rigid that only very few extraordinary men could possess them. The arduous spiritual discipline required of a *sannyasin* was not meant for all. Even in the philosophy of Shankara, the world is treated as real for all practical purposes. Berkeley in the West interpreted matter as a mind dependent entity or an idea; and Kant maintained the empirical reality of the world, while making it transcendently ideal. The Western world, since Berkeley, Kant, and Hegel, has made remarkable progress even in the world of matter. It was the same with India. Properly interpreted, the philosophy of the Hindus gave ample scope for the realisation of their highest worldly ambitions.

Under the influence of that philosophy, the Hindu mind achieved remarkable triumphs in the secular sphere, in the past. The Hindus laid the foundations of mathematical and mechanical knowledge. " They measured the land, mapped out the heavens, traced the course of the sun and the planets through the zodiacal belt, analysed the constitution of matter and studied the nature of birds and beasts, plants and seeds " In arts and industries, India was second to none even up to the eighteenth century. The Hindus also have been—and so also the Muslims—excellent soldiers, great generals, and conquerors, and founders of empires. Sir John Woodroffe writes " An historical survey of India shows that she has produced all varieties of human character. India which is religious also produced...the Charvakas and Lokayatas, materialists and sensualists who denied the existence of God, reviled the Vedas and the priests as frauds and cheats, sought

enjoyment only in life, leaving at death as many debts as possible. India which produced ascetic defamers of women in the style of the Christian Fathers also worked out a scientific scripture of Eroticism—the Kama Shastra, wrote sensuously conceived literature, carved recondite obscenities on its temples, and painted similar scenes for the incitement of its passions. The same India which in the person of the *Sannyasi* fled from the world to the forest also glorified that world in sumptuous art. India was meditative and yet gave birth to men of action celebrated as warriors and statesmen, and a people who governed themselves practically and with success." As Mr Bartholomy Saint Hilaire said: 'In no country in the whole world has communal autonomy been so developed.' It was, Professor Monier Williams said, self-government in all its purity: "The Hindu Kings were not autocrats. Their will was as much subject to the general Dharma as were the people...Until almost the close of the eighteenth century, India was renowned for its artizanship and industries. The wealth of Ormz and of Ind was proverbial."

#### 14. NO BLIND DETERMINISM.

It is necessary to remove these misconceptions about India's past, because they put us completely on the wrong track about the influence of its culture upon its present status, and future possibilities. Civilization has its ups and downs everywhere. India which was once on the top of the wave has now gone down. There is no dark over-arching fate over her destiny making it permanently impossible for her to assert herself against the heavy odds which overwhelm her to-day. The so-called "slave-mind" of the Indian people is certainly not the inevitable outcome of its racial composition, of its geographical environment, of its perverse philosophy and religion. It is merely the outcome of rather certain unfavourable circumstances in the past. The Hindu has been the victim of ignorance, of age-long oppression—social, political, religious, and economic—of grim poverty, of a narrow and exclusive



### 30 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

caste system. But there are signs that he is slowly but surely awaking from his deep slumber and once more becoming conscious of his position and responsibilities in the world to day.

**SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TRANSITION:**

**1757 - 1885**



## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TRANSITION

1757-1885

### I RISE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN INDIA.

The years 1757 and 1857 are memorable years in the annals of India. Roughly speaking the whole nineteenth century witnessed the transition of India from a medieval economy to modern life. India has been accustomed to invasions, changes of dynasties, wars, and conquests. But the new power which now appears on the scene is in many ways unique. In one way it always remains and wants to remain altogether foreign, the European does not want to settle in India. In another way it more completely enters into the very life and civilisation of this country than any previous foreign power. In this double fact lies both its strength and its weakness. The previous empires were more or less military occupations affecting the surface of Indian life. The vast mass of population entrenched behind the isolated and self-contained village and the formidable caste system remained largely untouched by the rise and fall of dynasties at great centres of Indian life. These empires were essentially tax-collecting agencies; they allowed the main currents of Indian life to flow in the old channels. Culturally indeed there was considerable give and take between the Hindu and Muslim systems. Yet the main framework of ancient Hindu society remained unshaken.

Now in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Euro-

## 34 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

pean appears and slowly takes possession of this vast country. It is best to throw a veil over the beginnings of empires. The Clives and Hastings have to do a lot of rough work; and they often forget the great distinction between right and wrong. The early years of the Company's rule are certainly a dark page in the history of the relationship between Great Britain and India. The story of these years can be read in Torrens' "Our Empire in Asia" or Wilson's "Sword and Ledger." In the words of Lala Lajpat Rai, "Hindus were played against the Muhammedans and *vice versa*, Jats against Rajputs, Mahrattas against both and so on. Treaties were made and broken without the least scruple; sides were taken and changed, without the least consideration of honour or faith. Thrones were purchased and sold to the highest bidder. Military support was purchased and given like merchandise. Servants were induced to betray their masters, soldiers to desert flags, without any regard to the morality of the steps taken. Pretences were invented and occasions sought for involving states and principalities in war and trouble. The one object in view was to loot, to plunder and to make an empire. Everything was subordinated to that end...the history of British Conquest in India is a continuous record of political charlatantry, political faithlessness and political immorality. It was a triumph of British 'diplomacy.' Empires can only be conceived by the Napoleons, Bismarcks, Disraelis, Richlieus, and Machiavellis. They can only be built by the Clives, Hastings, Wellesleys and Dalhousies. The Burkes and Gladstones cannot do that work, nor can the Morleys, though they may connive at others doing it, and might accept it as a *fait accompli*."<sup>1</sup>

But this is only one side of the story. The English are said to have conquered India in a fit of absence of mind. The transformation from a company of traders to one of the greatest empires the world has seen, is truly a marvellous phenomenon. It was all a drift in the characteristic English way from what seemed to be one blunder to another. Again and again the instruction from home was to cry halt: and yet by what looks

like a natural process, the empire went on swelling till the whole of India and Burma became integral parts of this great political fabric.

#### PROCESS OF EMPIRE-MAKING

The early Governor-Generals were busy with the work of conquest and consolidation. The greatest work of the century was to bring the whole of India under one power, one administrative, legal, and economic system. The English were certainly unlike the great barbarian hordes which occasionally swept over this country from the North under Timur or Nadir Shah and then passed away. To represent the whole process of empire-building as one long loot is to miss the meaning of it altogether. Force and fraud are often instrumental to some extent in laying the foundations of empires or big fortunes. But it is not possible to build up such a huge political structure and to work it efficiently for a long period by sheer force and fraud. You can terrorise or deceive some people for all time or all people for ~~all~~ <sup>some</sup> time. But you cannot terrorise or deceive all people for all time.

To repeat, the essential purpose of the century of British rule in this country is to bring the whole of this vast country under one central power. That was partly the object of the greatest rulers in the past—of Yudhishtira, of Asoka, of Samudragupta, of Akbar. That object was achieved for the first time by the British.

India divided into so many states, small and great, meant the perpetuation of a state of war, even of anarchy. The work of Hastings and Wellesley and Dalhousie lay above all in establishing one paramountcy over the land. That was why the non-interference policy never succeeded; it meant a state of perpetual instability, of disequilibrium.

The history of India from 1757 almost up to 1883 is largely the history of the gradual growth of the British Empire in India through wars and treaties and conquests. The system of subsi-

### 36 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

diary alliances was only a clever trick by which the process of conquest was a little disguised; the policy of annexation of Dalhousie was more logical but less diplomatic. The policy of splendid isolation was accepted only to be given up under the pressure of forces from all sides; and so the Empire grew, step by step, till all India became one single, consolidated unit.

#### 3. FUNDAMENTAL CAUSE OF THE FAILURE OF THE HINDUS AND THE MUSLIMS

An unbiassed study of historical facts teaches us in an unmistakeable fashion that Great Britain in the nineteenth century made two very important contributions to the cause of civilization in India: these are the establishment of the *Pax Britannica* and the unification of India. To understand the precise significance of these, it is very necessary to remember the exact situation of India in the eighteenth century at the death of Aurungzeb and the consequent break-up of the Moghul Empire. Might then was right. There was a chaos of conflicting powers. Adventurers rose, set up independent principalities, ruled for a time over these and again disappeared. Poor, innocent populations had to submit meekly to the ravages and exactions of either the conquering hordes of some more or less well established power or of roving bands of marauders. All over India there was a floating population of fighting people, who sold their arms to the highest bidder. Agriculture, industry, trade could not flourish in these conditions. Here and there, the genius of a man like Hyder or Tippoo could now and then set up fairly orderly and progressive petty empires. But they could not last long. Here and there there were the strivings of a budding nationality asserting itself against the forces of particularism and disruption. This is the meaning of the great Mahratta and Sikh efforts at empire-building. But behind the Hindus there was no singleness of purpose, no one governing idea, and there was the powerful factor of caste. A Hastings and a Clive in spite of all their unscrupulousness and moral weakness never thought of setting up their own little kingdoms

independent of Great Britain. Why not? There was a steady and an undeviating allegiance to their nationality. Such a force was never operative among the Indians of the eighteenth century; and although there was the idea of a Hindu revival behind the great effort of Shiwaji and the Peshwas, there was no cementing force of nationality. Hence the intrigues between the rival factions of Madhojee Sindhia and Nana Fadnavis; hence the distrust and jealousy among the Mahrattas and Brahmin Peshwas; hence the differences between the Rajputs and the Mahrattas at the battle of Panipat, hence the attempts again and again at setting up independent principalities, whether Hindu or Muhammedan; hence the spectacle of Hindu sepoy fighting on the side of a Muhammedan power, and both Hindu and Muhammedan sepoy easily fighting their own co-religionists as members of the Company's army.

Neither the Hindus nor the Muhammedans were able to build up a stable social and political system on the basis of the principle of nationality. Autocracy, personal rule, prevailed everywhere; and while such an autocracy or a personal rule of a great man like Albar or Balaji Peshwa might achieve wonders for a time, it was sure to be followed by a reaction, a division after the death of that able dictator. This was the root weakness of all medieval oriental despotisms, and this gave an immense advantage to the British over them. Great Britain is in a way unique in the world; and in virtue of her tradition embodied in a permanent, stable political system, organised on the basis of the principle of nationality, she established her superiority over the rival warring powers.

India at that time badly wanted internal peace and security; and to guarantee that peace and security it was necessary that there should be one single Power in the whole country; and that Power, whatever may be its lapses and shortcomings in actuality, did stand for peace and security. The great lesson of eighteenth century history in India is that order is heaven's first law; and



only on the basis of order, can true liberty grow. It was because Great Britain brought this gift of internal peace and stability that she won. The conquest of India by Britain is not the conquest of mere brute force; it is not the conquest of mere duplicity and cunning; it is the conquest of a socially superior system over a decaying and disintegrating culture; the conquest of the principles of order and unity as the very basis of social life over the rival principles of disunity and chaos.

#### THE EMPIRE NOT THE RESULT OF A PLAN.

The most astonishing thing about this empire is the way in which it grew—there was no deep-laid planning, no conscious design behind it. It seems that a higher purpose, a divinity shaped the whole fabric from beginning to end. The British are not considered a logical people; they are not guided by abstract theories or *a priori* principles. But they have proved themselves masters in the art of applying temporary expedients to temporary difficulties. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. This is their policy—this is their nature. They have therefore virtually drifted into an Empire.

One result of this is that the present provinces are pure administrative divisions; they are not based on any principle of cultural or linguistic unity. Bombay Presidency, for example, is a modern creation; and it included such various peoples as the Sindhis, the Gujeratis, and the Deccanis, and the Kanarese.

In the same way, the whole system has grown in a haphazard fashion. Now one policy is tried and now another; mistakes are made and then corrected; Governors are sent and then recalled; but in course of time, the British are able to evolve, largely under the pressure of immediate facts and day-to-day necessities, a truly wonderful administrative structure in this country. From trade they slowly drifted to empire, from a state of complete irresponsibility in the beginning, through a state of partial responsibility, to a state of more complete responsibility;

and from a system entirely autocratic-because it was a lineal descendant of the Moghul-to a system more or less representative of the peoples and princes of India to-day. Such is the story of India as we move from 1774 (the Regulating Act) to 1784 (Pitt's India Act); from 1784 to 1813, 1833, 1853 (the great Charter Acts), from 1858 (the Government of India Act) to 1893, from 1893 to 1909 (Morley-Minto Reforms); from 1909 to 1917 (Montague-Chelmsford Reforms) and from 1917 to 1937 (the New Constitution). New principles are slowly introduced at each stage, their working is then tested and examined; and almost imperceptibly the great transition is made from the autocratic system of the past to the constitutional system of to-day or to-morrow.

### 5. CONSTITUTIONAL LANDMARKS.

A glance at the constitutional development of India during the century shows us in a clear and unambiguous fashion the slow cultural changes taking place in India during this time. For the changes have been deliberately adopted with reference to the existing circumstances. The Battle of Plassey in 1757 gave Clive the key to the supremacy of India. The English began from the north, while the French had begun from the south; this was one strategic advantage which they enjoyed over the French. In 1765, Clive gets the Divani of Bengal from the Delhi Emperor-it means the *de facto* control over that very rich province. In 1774, the British Government was rather perturbed at the anomalous nature of the whole situation and proceeded to systematise the whole business; British India was unified, the Governor of Bengal became the Governor-General of India. Power was now centralised in this newly created Government of India-which now meant the Government by the Governor-General assisted by his executive council. And above all, this Act laid the foundation of the Indian judiciary. This was called the Regulating Act. it was the first attempt on the part of the British Parliament to undertake the responsibility involved in the Company's acts in India.

Pitt's India Act of 1784 kept alive the outward form of

## 40 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

the authority but introduced a radical change in the character of the supreme authority in England. Political power passed from the Court of Directors to a new body called the Board of Control, which was to consist of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State, and four Privy Councillors. This act also laid down drastic provisions for the prevention and punishment of the corruption and oppression which had become rampant among the Company's servants. The attack on Clive and the impeachment of Warren Hastings, coupled with Pitt's Act, were all great gestures which had enormous moral value; their supreme lesson was "that Asiatics had rights and Europeans obligations in India." "All that we value in the growth and progress of British India to-day, was rendered possible only because of the radical reformation in aim and in temper, in personnel and in morals, which conscientious and determined critics of the East India Company forced upon it between 1770 and 1790"<sup>2</sup>

Then followed the Charter Acts of 1793, 1813, 1833, and 1853. In 1833, a Law member was added to the Executive Council of the Governor-General. This was the nucleus of the present Legislative Assembly. In 1853, six new members were added to the Governor-General's Council for purposes of legislation. This was a further development of the Indian Legislature.

In 1858, the Company's Raj came to an end. The Government of India Act of 1858 substituted for the Board of Control and the Court of Directors, a Secretary of State for India and a Council. The Proclamation of the Queen to the peoples and princes of India fittingly ushered in a new era in the relations between the two countries.

"We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects, and those obligations by the blessing of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.

"And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially,

admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity duly to discharge.

“ It is our earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to administer its government for the benefit of all our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment our security, and in their gratitude our best reward.”

The Indian Councils Act of 1861 for the first time introduced non-official element into the Central Indian legislature. Moreover, the Act provided for the establishment of legislative councils for Bombay, Madras, Bengal, and some other provinces. These legislative bodies were, after all, merely advisory bodies; but they were the nuclei from which the Parliament of the future would grow.

#### 6. THE CIVIL SERVICE.

The organisation of a civil service was more necessary for the administration than the organisation of legislatures. Clive and Hastings both realised that power without responsibility is an unmitigated course and laid the foundations of an efficient service. Lord Cornwallis shut out Indians from all responsible and high positions completely, in order to raise the level of these services and to make Englishmen learn and do the work themselves and not rely completely on and make use of their Indian official subordinates. But the demands of work increased; and Lord William Bentinck found it necessary to appoint qualified Indians to some higher jobs. The Charter Act of 1833 laid down the famous principle: “No native of the said territories, nor any natural born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour in any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the Company.” The despatch added “that the object of this important enactment is not to ascertain qualification, but to remove dis-

## 42 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

qualification. Its meaning we take to be that there shall be no governing caste in British India. Fitness, wholly irrespective of the distinction of races is henceforth to be the criterion of eligibility."

The Proclamation of the Queen in 1858 confirmed this principle. The Indian Civil Service Act of 1861 introduced the principle of open competition for the highest civil appointments. But Indians had to appear at the Civil Service Examination under rigid age conditions in England and come out successful against the best talents of English Universities. In 1879, the Statutory Civil Service came into existence; the recruitment to the first of these was to be through the open competitive examination held in London.

I will quote the substance of Prof. Thakore's picture of the work of the Civil Service during this period. "The first generation ( i. e up to 1850 ) were the road-makers and the bridge-builders...They created the land-revenue and the judicial systems and knew the people of their district in their various social grades as thoroughly as it is possible for foreigners to acquire such knowledge. They were lonely men, separated from one another, with little of Europe in their bungalows and their tents. They were exiles in the full sense of the term, but exiles with absorbing occupations which evoked every ounce of faculty and required every second of time, and they lived dedicated lives. If the roots of the British conception of state and administration have gone deep into the soil of India, if medievalism be really going to be uprooted hence and modernity to be really going to grow up to a long and vigorous prime, it is they who have created the miracle, their husbandry, their faith, and their devotion

"The second generation ( upto 1880 ) saw the cutting of the Suez Canal and the replacement of the sailing vessel by the steamer and with these began the invasion of India by the Memsahib...And the Gymkhana and clubs as well as European

homes now invaded the mofussil. The spread of the railways tended more and more to bridge the chasm that in the past had separated the mofussil and the capital, and the vogue began of hill stations and of long and frequent furloughs. Codes came to be drawn up, departments grew up fast, secretariats directed all and wanted to know more than all. The individual was dwarfed, the system throve...The written record of the work grew in bulk and improved in quality. The departments multiplied, the system grew and improved from the secretariat point of view, until to own logical development and perfection became an end in itself...

"The *corps d'élite* (in the third generation from 1880-1910) became more and more self-conscious, more impatient of criticism as intelligent criticism increased, retired within its shell, and became a caste of white Brahmins, more exclusive than any caste had ever been in India...Jingoism held increasing sway in England from about 1875 onwards for the rest of the century, and many of this third generation, of our rulers here, were jingoes.....And finally, the average of ability, vigour, vision, and understanding was certainly lower than in the second generation, for the best talent of England was no longer attracted to India."<sup>3</sup>

## 7. EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS


From the very beginning, the East India Company was slowly becoming conscious of its responsibilities to a certain extent towards the people of India. Their motives were of a rather mixed type. There are three main currents in educational activity: the one is directed by the Government, the other by missionary effort, and the third by the people themselves. The missionaries wanted to spread Christianity; their object was not always immediate conversion, but they thought that if people were educated enough, they would be able to see the beauty of Christianity for themselves. The Government could not carry on the huge work of detailed administration in every department by means of the foreign agency; hence with the growth of administration, there was

## 44 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

an increasing demand of English-educated people. The new system that had to be worked was Western; and the English would not learn the vernacular languages to the extent that was desired. English therefore soon became the language of the courts and offices; and the demand for English education increased. There was also the desire to spread light and dispel ignorance among the benighted peoples of India.

The Hindu College in Calcutta was founded in 1817, largely under the influence of Raja Ram Mohun Roy; and the missionaries started Serampore College in 1818. The question of introducing western education in India was taken up seriously by Lord William Bentinck's Government. There was a controversy between the Orientalists and the Anglicists; and Macaulay—a member of the Governor-General's Council—threw his weight decisively in favour of English education. "A single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia." And he asked whether they should countenance at the public expense: medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier, astronomy which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school, history abounding with kings, thirty feet high and reigns thirty-thousand years long, and geography made of seas of treacle and seas of butter." Raja Ram Mohun Roy was equally emphatic in his advocacy of the claims of the new learning. "If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate their ignorance. In the same manner, the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British Legislature."<sup>4</sup>

This was the real beginning of the great revolution, ushered by the British into Indian life and institutions. The Indian Universities came into existence after the despatch of Sir Charles Wood in 1854; and the number of B. A.'s and M. A.'s went on swelling year after year. ~

Nothing has more decisively influenced the current of Indian life in a certain direction than this spread of English ideas in an eastern society. The contact and even occasionally the clash of two great cultures—the one in its state of decay, and the other in its state of bloom, so different from each other—has proved to be one of the turning-points in the history of Asia and even of the world. 

The Indians had come under a common government and a common administrative system. Now they began to come under the influence of a common culture and develop therefore a common political and cultural consciousness—which was different from the old Hindu, or the Muslim, or Hindu-Muslim consciousness. Language is one of the many ties which link together diverse people in a common fold; and now the people of the different parts of India could exchange their thoughts with one another through a common medium. English language may be a foreign language, but it is the language which continues to be employed at all national conferences and congresses. But more important than this is the creation of a common intellectual atmosphere all over India. The same ideas and feelings were inspired in the Indian mind all over the country by this new culture. The B. A. of the Calcutta University is very much like the B. A. of the Bombay and the Madras Universities in his intellectual outlook and equipment. The significance of a common administrative and educational system in the creation of an all-India consciousness cannot be over-emphasised.

The nature of the content of the new culture in its relation to Indian life is even more important. It would not be possible to exult over the spectacle of India coming under one foreign rule and made to accept one foreign language, if that rule were the rule of barbarians, if that language were not the vehicle of great ideas. It is therefore necessary to emphasise the precise character of this rule and of this language, if we are to form a critical judgment with regard to their effects upon India.



The English language is a language of the modern world-of the new European culture. At first its teaching gave a terrible shock to the whole people of Asia. It roused us from our dogmatic slumber of ages. It sent a new life into our nerves and made us altogether changed beings. It gave us new ideals of liberty and nationality, of equality and progress, which we had not dreamt of for ages. It gave us a new thirst for freedom, for self-government, for democratic institutions. It roused our social conscience and made us keenly alive to the anomalies and absurdities of our decaying social institutions. It roused our religious conscience, and we began to shake off the dust which had gathered thick upon our creeds and religious practices. It gave us new eyes, new ears, new powers of judgment, criticism, and evaluation. It sounded the death-knell of mere authority in every department of life; and it tried to substitute critical reflection for a blind submission to accepted ways and usages. In this sense Britain has brought not peace, but a sword. She has set children against parents, pupils against teachers, community against community, labour against capital, woman against man, the ruled against their rulers, the radical and progressive against the orthodox and conservative everywhere.

The Indian mind, which was cribbed, cabined and confined for centuries, suddenly became free. It had moved in the same old grooves for years; now it acquired a consciousness of undreamt-of possibilities and began to move on uncharted waters, unpathed shores. History, literature, logic, philosophy, science, the arts, religion; each of these great departments of human thought put on a new life and began to develop on new lines of its own. In one word, change had come with a vengeance and whatever else change may mean, it at least means life.

### 8. ECONOMIC TRANSITION.

Political changes very often go hand in hand with economic changes; but in the India of the nineteenth century, this was true

to an extent that it was never true before in Indian history. The new invader has brought with him a new economic civilisation: civilisation based on machine-technology, mass production, and the capitalist ownership and management of economic goods and services. The story of this economic transition of India may be summed up in one phrase; it is a transition from a society based on status to a society based on contract; it is a transition from village economy to a national or international economy: it is a transition from small-scale production to a large-scale production. The transition has only begun; but this seems to be its main trend

The great change which has come over the economic and consequently the social and political organisation of Europe in the early part of the nineteenth century through the introduction of the steam-engine and the telegraph came over India in the latter half of the same century. The railway has become a great instrument in the hands of the newly established imperialism in India. Its primary services to the empire are its material assistance in the military consolidation of vast and far-flung Indian territories and the capture of the Indian market for British manufactured goods. India was a big agricultural country, producing raw materials; Great Britain was establishing herself as a great manufacturing country in need of raw materials from abroad and a safe and stable market for her ever-increasing quantity of finished goods. The cutting of the Suez Canal and the appearance of the steam-ship made it easy for trade to move quickly on the sea from Europe to India and India to Europe. The whole nature of foreign trade changed; it was no longer confined to a few costly and rare articles; it could adequately handle and move vast masses of bulky and cheap goods from continent to continent. The railways carried the same process further; they facilitated the transport of goods from the interior to the ports and from the ports to the interior. The vast masses of newly created capital in Great Britain began to find a safe, sure, and fruitful instrument in the railways as well as some of the other industries like jute, or tea, or indigo which could

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be worked on a large scale by means of much capital.

The supreme service of the railways, with their adjuncts, the Post and Telegraph, was to convert India into one economic unit. The internal trade barriers, customs walls soon disappeared; the diverse systems of currency soon gave way to one single uniform system of paper currency and coinage all over India. India had become one market; local village economy slowly broke down before the pressure of the new forces. The spectacle of a glut of foodstuffs lying idle in one place and a severe famine at a slightly distant place became a thing of the past. The whole character of famines underwent an alteration; it is no longer a case of food-famine; it is a case of scarcity of money, of purchasing power.

The railways have also been instrumental in effecting a certain amount of unification in Indian social life. All sorts of people—high caste, low caste—could now travel in the same compartment; and some of the scruples of the orthodox people as regards food, drink, and touchability melted away. The isolation and exclusiveness of the old life are disappearing; and labour is also becoming more mobile, slowly shifting to places where it finds the best market. The movement of local and national leaders and of specialised scholars in Philosophy, Economics, History, Oriental Studies, Science to different centres in India once every year to attend their respective conferences, congresses, assemblies and councils has now become a permanent feature of Indian public life; and this rapid intercommunication between thinkers and scholars in the different parts of the country and the resulting organisation of unified thought and action are due above all to this marvellous improvement in communications witnessed by the nineteenth century.

The railways were a part of a great economic transition that has taken place in India during the last hundred years. Such transitions are always bound to have temporarily unpleasant consequences for many trades and industries and especially for the workers. But in India the transition was rather too sudden.

And there was little time for industry to adjust itself to the new situation. The transition besides was forced upon India in the interests largely of the British capitalist; hence India could only curse the doubtful blessings of the new Raj

The result, therefore, of the sudden entry of cheap, machine-made products into the Indian markets, facilitated by the adoption of the doctrine of free trade by Great Britain, the revolution in communications, and the industrialisation of England, led to the gradual destruction of indigenous industries in India. "Had strategic or economic conditions permitted the change ( i. e. the introduction of railways ) to be more gradual, it is conceivable that greater powers of resistance might have been shown by the native industries, that the lessons of the West might have been taught before destruction was inevitable, so that labour might have drifted to other occupations as well as agriculture." "The external trade of the country has grown at the expense of the internal, resulting in an unhealthy and one-sided development of the country's resources. Roads, railways, telegraphs, the construction of the Suez Canal, and every improvement of the means of transport both by sea and land have contributed to the difficulties, and in many cases to the ultimate discomfiture of the Indian artisan. The attention of the Government has been almost entirely directed to the opening of the land, to provision of irrigation, assistance has in more than one case been given directly to the efforts of English manufactures to exploit Indian markets, while the industrious artisan has been left seriously alone to combat as best as he can the growing difficulties of his position."

The whole economic environment however has radically changed. The perpetual insecurity under which all classes laboured in the unsettled times of the eighteenth century has disappeared. The country became organised as one solid well-knit unit; and it was now linked up with the main currents of the world's economic system. The social system of the Indians also is slowly modifying itself in response to the needs of the new age. The power of

religious ideas or of the caste-system tends to relax more and more. With greater freedom, with growing intelligence, with a more complete security and a more settled society, with a thorough-going revolution in communications, it has become possible for India to restart her economic life on a new foundation. The first cotton-mill in India was established in 1838; and in 1853, a Parsee merchant started a mill in Bombay; in 1875 there were nearly 50 cotton mills in India, and to-day we have hundreds of mills for the production of yarn and cloth by steam power, scattered all over the country. Thus we have made a start in industrialisation and this movement promises to develop considerably in the near future.

#### 9. ESTABLISHMENT OF ONE SYSTEM.

Summing up, it may be said that a new era has set in India. Great Britain's conquest of India from 1757 to 1857 is one of the outstanding facts of this century. For India, it was both a loss and a gain. She exchanged a number of mutually conflicting indigenous powers for one single foreign power. Some critics emphasise the word "indigenous" and "foreign" and think that it is a great catastrophe, a long humiliation for Indian people. Others emphasise the words "mutually conflicting" and "one" and find that it is decidedly a change for the better. Be that as it may, India's awakening is no doubt due to the electrifying touch of an altogether different civilisation. For good or evil her fortunes are linked with Great Britain for a hundred years and more. Great Britain has brought the whole country under one single system *culturally once more*, and thus brought about a certain all-India consciousness. Great Britain has thrown open the doors of a new culture and has thus roused the latent consciousness of India to her own peculiar needs and problems. I shall now narrate the story of the efforts of Indian thinkers to adjust their lives and institutions to a new environment, and the new environment to their own culture especially in the social and political spheres.

## **RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM**



## RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM

### I. HINDU SOCIETY IN ITS DECLINE.

✓ Hindu society had sunk to almost its lowest point during the eighteenth century. With a few intermittent periods of revival, it had become a huge, static, fossilised organisation. The customary morality and customary respectability were still there; patient acquiescence in all sorts of evil was there; but there was no life, no capacity for progress. The Brahmins maintained a rigorous control over people's lives; and all power of independent thinking and activity had gone. The caste system, with its endlessly growing ramifications, its increasing rigidity in matters of inter-dining, of marriage and other customs, stilled in its death-like embrace the lives, hopes, and aspirations of individuals and classes.

Early marriage i.e. the marriage of boys between the ages of ten and sixteen and of girls between six and ten, had become almost universally prevalent among the Hindus. The result was that thousands of young girls became widows before they had ever seen their husbands, or arrived at physical maturity. These widows in the higher castes were not allowed to remarry; and their lot was exceedingly miserable. The Kulins of Bengal used to marry a number of wives; and a Brahmin in Bengal who had married a hundred wives was considered a model of respectability. Polygamy prevailed among many sections of Hindus, and also among Muhammedans.

The position of women in general was in many ways pitiable.



The purdah was a striking characteristic of both Hindu and Muhammedan domestic life. High-caste women could not come out of their apartments and show their faces to the outside world. "There the woman lay, condemned to a life-long prison a helpless, prostrate and pathetic figure, with enfeebled health, her naturally keen senses dulled through inaction, without the light of knowledge illumining her vision, steeped in ignorance and prejudice, groping in the dark—a martyr to the conventions of the society in which she had been born"<sup>1</sup>

Equally hard was the lot of the lower classes—called now the depressed classes—the *Shudras* or helots of society. They were 'untouchables;' even their shadow would pollute a high-caste Brahmin. They had to stay apart in a segregated locality, and were debarred from the ordinary privileges of attending a school or using the village wells, or mixing in any way with the high-caste Hindus.

## 2. FIRST EFFECTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising to find an extraordinary enthusiasm in the first generation of English-educated men for British rule. The Bengalee Babu was the first to receive new education: and he was the first to rebel against the effete forms and mummeries of orthodox Hinduism. A little draught however, as usually happens, intoxicated the brain: and deeper draughts were necessary before the Indian mind could become sober again. The young men of Bengal were as yet initiated only in a few English authors and their education largely consisted in the repetition of a few English phrases. But the chattering of a few English idioms soon became the fashion of the day: and it was considered a mark of culture and scholarship. The first result was that a mood of superficial thinking and thoughtless acting came upon them. The old beliefs and customs which were the only basis of social order and stability soon lost their hold over the batches of young men who came out year after year from the Hindu College. The young mind felt giddy under

the influence of the new ideas, lost its bearings, developed an atmosphere of radical doubt with regard to all things in heaven and earth, looked at orthodox customs with contempt and threw them lightly aside as so much rubbish, and so fell an easy victim to the glamour of a few practices which they associated with the refined western life. As a rule, "education neither stimulated the intellect to originality, nor influenced the heart to profound impulse. On the other hand, with the increasing knowledge, there was an increasing progress of self-indulgence; scepticism had extensively infected the rising generation, and strict morality was ceasing to have any hold on young Bengal. The industrious student of Shakespeare and Milton in the Hindu College could scarcely spell his name in the mother tongue. Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic held in such supreme reverence but a few years before, as the only source of wisdom, were looked upon with unconcealed contempt. They were barbarous, unwholesome, unfashionable"<sup>1</sup> It is so easy to fall, and so difficult to build up a new morality. The old morality appeared as a series of meaningless restrictions and nothing so delighted the wild imagination of these half-baked youths as to kick them aside. The forms of Western civilisation could be easily copied; but the spirit of that civilisation took time to percolate. The break-up of the old order therefore brought as its immediate consequence an era of loose living and superficial thinking. The contact with the West meant to them freedom—freedom to eat what they like, drink what they like, act how they like, and think how they like. "It meant the introduction of European luxuries of food and drink, the free and easy ways of the West, the abolition of social discipline, the exactions of Brahmin priests and impetunious relatives. Excessive indulgence in the use of alcoholic liquors characterized the educated community; concomitant vices showed themselves, and premature mortality began to rage among the rising generation. The emancipation of women began to be talked about, and here and there the doors of the zenana were flung open. Men before they had learnt to humor the gentler sex, felt a trenchant desire to be introduced

into the company of the female relations of their neighbours. Third-rate English novels illustrated the questionable benefits of such promiscuous communion.....Impurity of character among the educated classes became proverbial, philosophers of the sceptical and agnostic school, scientific opponents of religion and morality, the apostles of Utilitarianism, the materialistic professors of nescience, and so-called positivism, overspread the land with their teachings. The ancient scriptures of the country, the famous records of the spiritual experiences of the great men of numerous Hindu sects, had long since been discredited. The advancing tide of a very mixed civilization, with as much evil as good in it, the flood of fashionable carnality, threatened to carry everything before it"<sup>3</sup>

### 3. THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY: HIS FAILURE IN INDIA.

The first phase of the new education was thus destructive. There was a headlong rush from one form of life to another, from a life rigidly hemmed in by all sorts of restrictions in every petty detail of life to a life of wanton self-indulgence. Freedom is a charmed word: it carries with it all sorts of associations in all sorts of contexts. The blessed word 'freedom' always first means negative freedom: it means an end of a life of restraint, it means immunity from inhibitions. The age of sophistication often supervenes the age of dogmatism, the human mind recovers its freedom from the tyranny of a customary morality and customary religion; but it falls a victim to the more destructive tyranny of its own whims. The era of unchartered freedom tires sooner or later and the mind once more begins to pine for a new order a new discipline.

The Christian missionary had early appeared on the scene and was busy partly fomenting this work of destruction of the old order and partly trying to help the construction of the new. Three forces were let loose upon Hindu society at a time when it had reached a very low level of life, where mere meaningless and

even mischievous routine reigned supreme: Western education, Western administration, and Christianity. The moment the eyes of some Hindus were opened to the absurdity of their customs, they were offered a new substitute gratis on the spot, imported from the West. If Hinduism is a mass of superstitions, there was no reason why the Hindu should fly from religion to irreligion: there was ready for him a new faith which would solve all his problems and meet all his needs. This new faith had the advantage of being associated with the new masters of Hindustan; it was the faith of the men who had given the world that splendid literature and science, which had begun to fascinate the mind of the Hindu; it was sponsored in India often by men like Duff, Carey, Wilson, who were remarkable for their enthusiasm for Christianity as well as for their character. There was a flood of propaganda over the country; schools were started, colleges were opened, sermons were preached everywhere; the Bible was translated into the vernaculars and copies were freely circulated among the people. The Christian missionary saw his opportunity: he found here a field almost waiting for a general movement for reform on modern lines: and he did not spare money or energy in trying to scatter the seeds of his faith wherever he could. But the Hindus had been developing for a thousand years a technique of safeguarding their culture behind a series of almost impregnable fortifications. A great virile community, when it found that it had not the necessary vitality or resources to rally against the Muslim invaders, retired within its own shell and developed various defences behind which it could maintain successfully its own existence against all outside attacks. The one problem of the Hindu community since the Muslim advent was throughout the maintenance of the *status quo*; it wanted to live; and it lived by converting itself into a purely defensive and therefore also a rigidly static organisation.

• The Christian missionary, therefore, failed: he failed in spreading his influence either upwards or downwards, for he could not convert either the higher castes or the lower caste which constitute the masses of India. One of his great blunders was to insist upon the literal acceptance of his faith rather than upon the spread of a

spirit of finer morality among the people. The people saw his failure not so much in his inability to make conversions and swell the number of Christians in India as in his inability to fire the few people who came under his influence with the zeal of a higher and nobler ideal of life. If the thinking Hindus had seen the emergence, under the influence of Christian propaganda, of a new and more attractive type representing a finer morality than the one which the old society had put forth, they would have slowly but surely succumbed to its influence. They would have confessed that, whatever theoretical recommendations the new creed had or had not, its influence upon life was decidedly for the better. Such a conviction would have gone far in slowly dissolving even the granite of prejudice. ¶ The Christians can never win in India by opposing one dogma to another, they can only win by putting forth a higher species of humanity before the imagination of the Hindus. ¶ The Hindu has gravitated wherever he has found a sweeter atmosphere, free from the lusts and fears of worldly life, and pervaded by a devotion to some higher power. He does not cease to be a Hindu but he absorbs in that way a new way of living. But if it comes to wrangling, to intellectual debates, the Hindu is not a fool and is not slow to perceive the weaknesses of the rival system offered to him as the ideal substitute for a decrepit Hinduism and then he turns the table very easily upon his opponent and scores a dialectical victory. ¶ Christianity committed a blunder in attacking Hinduism from without, without trying to understand it from within. It committed the blunder of mistaking the age-long forms for the essence of Hinduism and imagined that if these forms went, Hinduism would disappear altogether. ¶ And Christianity committed the further blunder of offering itself as a finely woven and securely founded intellectual system rather than as a new and a nobler way of life. The orthodox Hindu often feels unmitigated contempt for animal food and spirituous drink: and he saw that the acceptance of Christianity by Hindus only meant an orgy of meat-eating and wine-drinking. No wonder that he was disgusted with the whole process and turned to his own creed with a greater self-confidence and self-satisfaction. Here is a

## **SOCIAL LIBERALISM**



# **POLITICAL LIBERALISM**





## POLITICAL LIBERALISM

### I AWAKENING.

The Mutiny of 1857 may be taken as a convenient starting-point in the history of India's political struggles in the modern world. The old order represented by the Company Raj now disappears and gives way to a more conscious and deliberate assumption by the British Parliament of its responsibilities towards India. In India also the stage now becomes clear: and it is understood by all that the medieval order of conflicting Native Rajas and Nabobs has definitely passed away. The Mutiny was an attempt on a large scale for the last time for the old forces to assert themselves against the new régime. It failed: and with its failure, the British Rule emerges as a great all-India political organisation controlling roughly the whole of India from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin.

With the establishment of a comprehensive peace under one rule, the vague but growingly more definite pan-Indian political consciousness is born. This consciousness slowly begins to express itself in a number of ways. The greatest gift of the new dispensation is the freedom it has brought with it: and this freedom is practically at the root of the whole Indian National Movement. The Indian Universities established in 1854 soon began to turn out hundreds of graduates trained in modern history, modern politics, and modern economics.

The earliest exponents of India's cause were remarkable

men: but they were British, men like Burke or Macaulay or Bright or Fawcett. They are rightly called the Friends of India: and they laid the foundation of independent and impartial thinking about India's problems. They were fearless critics of British administration in India: and it was their example which above all served as a guide and inspiration to the early Indian politicians.

The agency which has perhaps played the most striking part in the evolution of modern Indian life is the Indian Press. Sir Charles Metcalfe restored the freedom of the Press in India: and the vernacular papers as well as the Indo-English papers began to make rapid progress. Ishwarchandra Gupta's *Prabhakar* was one of the earliest Indian papers which discussed politics. It was followed by a host of dailies and weeklies and monthlies. The *Hindu Patriot*, the *Indian Mirror*, the *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, the *Bengalee* and several others in Bengal, the *Rast Goftar* the *Bombay Samachar*, the *Hindu Prakash* the *Jam-e-Jamshid*, the *Mahratta*, the *Keasari* in Bombay: the *Hindu*, the *Standard*, the *Swadesh-mitra* and some others in Madras, the *Tribune* in Lahore: these among others played a prominent part in the awakening of Indian political consciousness in those days. Describing the influence of the Indian Press, John Bright said: "The Government Officials look into them (i. e. Indian Papers) to see if they are saying anything unpleasant to the Government—anything that indicates sedition or discontent, but never for the purpose of being influenced by the judgment of the writers and editors. The actual press of the country, which touches the Government, is the press of the English: and that press generally has been in favour of annexation of more territory, more places, more salaries, and ultimately more pensions."<sup>1</sup>

There was tremendous and growing suffering in the country: millions had been thrown out of employment by the breakdown of India's old industries: and pressure on the soil grew apace. Agricultural distress, therefore, supplied the major premiss of a revolution: and political education, unaccompanied by political power supplied the minor premiss, in the language of Blunt. Mere distress,

however acute or long-continued, does not always lead to upheavals: certainly not in India, where men generally find all explanation in the working of a mysterious and inscrutable fate. But now calamities which were formerly attributed to God came to be associated with the Government. Educated men began to know something of the operation of the law of cause and effect in the human and social sphere: and they soon connected the sufferings of the people with the policy of the Government.

## 2. RACE-CONSCIOUSNESS.

The policy of a Government is, however, a very general and vague thing to the people: it does not necessarily rouse people to the point of frenzy, as long as it is carried out in a broad, impersonal, inoffensive way. But the officers of the Government, the day-to-day exponents and visible embodiments of the Raj and its policy had not only no affection for the people, but did not care to hide their indifference and even contempt for them. The opening of the Suez Canal, while it shortened the physical distance between India and England, increased the mental distance between the two countries. The English officer ceased to be a trusted friend and a respected guardian and adviser, and became more and more either a cold and distant or a haughty and insolent representative of the Raj.

The exhibition in different forms of racial bitterness on the part of the members of the governing caste has been one main factor in the development of a decidedly anti-British attitude on the part of the Indian politicians. The earlier politicians did not make capital out of it: but the feeling has never been absent from the sub-conscious mind of India. Sir Henry Cotton has given us a graphic insight into the mind of the official and his dealings with the 'natives.' John Stuart Mill in his "Representative Government" says: "If there be a fact to which all experience testifies, it is that when a country holds another in subjection, the individuals of the ruling people, who resort to

## 150 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

the foreign country to make their fortunes are, of all others, those who most need to be held under powerful restraint. They are always one of the chief difficulties of the Government. Armed with the prestige and filled with the scornful overbearingness of the conquering nation, they have the feelings inspired by absolute power without the sense of responsibility. Among a people like that of India the utmost efforts of the public authorities are not enough for the effectual protection of the weak against the strong: and of all the strong, the European settlers are strongest, and wherever the demoralising effect of the situation is not in a most remarkable degree corrected by the personal character of the individual, they think the people of the country mere dirt under their feet; it seems to them monstrous that any rights of the natives should stand in the way of their smallest pretensions."

The English attitude in India becomes more hardened as the Indian becomes more and more educated, more and more conscious of his rights, and more alive to his national self-respect. Instances occur frequently of assaults on Indians by Europeans. Pedestrians have often been abused and struck because they have not lowered their umbrellas on meeting Europeans on the way. Indian gentlemen of the highest rank have been freely insulted in railway carriages by Englishmen travelling or desiring to travel in the same compartment. Even a Rajah—a chief of State has been made to shampoo Englishmen when he happened to travel with them.

Public attention was specially roused when now and then there was a scandalous failure of justice when the issue lay between an Indian on the one side and an Englishman on the other. In old times, the Government officials used to take the side of Indians against the non-official European community when necessary. But after the Mutiny, we find officials and non-officials making common cause against Indians. It is an ugly fact "which it is no use disguising, that the murders of natives by Englishmen is no infrequent occurrence. In one issue of the *Amrit Bazaar Patrika* of this month, three contemporary cases are dealt with, in

none of which have the prisoners paid the full penalty for murder."<sup>2</sup> Contrast this with the firmness with which justice was meted out to Indians in those days. I refer to the Maler Kotla Case of 1872. There was a riot in Ludhiana in connection with cow-killing : and a hundred fanatic Sikhs attacked a Punjab town. Sixty-six of them who survived, surrendered. The Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Cowan, blew forty-nine of them from the guns. Mr. Cowan was dismissed, though the entire Anglo-Indian Press was on his side.

This arrogant class-consciousness burst out in a violent form in the time of Lord Ripon against the famous Ilbert Bill. Lord Ripon wanted to remove the racial bar between Indians and Europeans in the matter of criminal jurisdiction. It was proposed that all district magistrates and sessions judges, Indian as well as European, should have the same criminal jurisdiction over European British subjects. It was a small affair, but the European community rose up against it as one man and started a very intense agitation all over the country. A conspiracy was formed to put the Viceroy on board a steamer at Chandpat Ghat, and send him to England via the Cape.<sup>3</sup> The Bill failed: but it left a permanent mark on Indian political life. The smouldering racial feelings found a vent which left no ambiguity in the minds of Indians about their position in the eyes of the officials. But above all, it gave an object lesson to the Indians about the enormous possibilities of a well-organised political agitation in the country.

### 3. EXTREMISM OF THE PRESS.

The movement gathered momentum during the viceroalties of Lord Mayo, Lord Northbrook and Lord Lytton. Lord Mayo's brief régime was marked by the Wahabi Trial, and Lord Northbrook's by the trial and deposition of the Gackwad on the ground of complicity in the attempted murder of the British Resident, Col. Phayre. Both these régimes excited public feeling

to a considerable extent in the country. Lord Lytton had Imperialist ambitions : and a number of events during his régime added fresh fuel to the popular feeling. The war against Afghanistan, partly because it menaced the freedom of a neighbouring country, and partly because it involved heavy financial expenditure on the part of the Government of India, aroused considerable opposition among the educated people in India. Equally unpopular and reactionary were two other measures : the Arms Act and the Vernacular Press Act. The Arms Act (1878) deeply touched the feeling of national self-respect of the Indians : and clearly evinced the complete want of confidence of the Government in the people of the country. The Vernacular Press Act (1877) had the same tendency; it attempted to stifle by force the expressions of public feeling on matters of national importance.

It is interesting to note the exact nature of political feelings among some sections of the people at that time. A paper called the "*Sadhavane*" attracted a lot of attention. In one article, referring to the fall of Plevna, during the Russo-Turkish War, the paper says: "We Hindus have borne and still bear the hardships and misery which follow the downfall of the prestige of a nation. In every bone, vein, and pore of our bodies, this sense of national degradation works as a slow consuming fire. God forbid that even our deadliest enemies should suffer as we do." In another article called "Spurious Loyalty", we read: "The study of the very alphabet of politics has taught us this, that the performance of pledges forms no part of politics. When the Russian Emperor, setting aside an old treaty, resolved to station men-of-war in the waters of the Black Sea, Mr. Mill was asked by the English Minister (of the day) to express his views on the subject. Mr. Mill then frankly declared that there was no connection between 'politics and the performance of pledges.' To-day finding myself in a dangerous position, I agree to pay you a tribute of a million sterling. But ten years hence, becoming conscious of my own strength, I find that if I do not pay the promised million, you will be powerless to enforce your demands. I accordingly break my promise.

“If you and I were to do anything of this kind, it would be considered a grievous crime. But kings frequently act this way. The science of politics is in no way concerned with morality or immorality.

“The British Government is continually breaking its promises. Thus it first engaged to pay an annual sum of fifty-three lakhs to the Nawab Nazim of Moorshidabad. This was reduced to 32 lakhs for some time, which again has been ultimately cut down to half this sum. The Fortress of Gwalior, belonging to the Scindia, and the Berars to the Nizam, once taken as securities have not been restored. These are common occurrences. A history of the non-fulfilment of promises by the British Government would be the whole history of the last hundred and fifty years. We are not so foolish as to believe that the British Government should now, after a period of profound peace for over eighteen years, redeem the promises which they made on the 1st of November, 1858, soon after the crisis of the Indian Mutiny. During that critical period there were dark clouds in the political sky; bright flashed the lightnings afar and European hearts were chilled with an icy fear. But now the gentle breeze of peace is blowing, the sun of prosperity shines on high. Where is the wonder then that the English should now throw aside the heavy clothes with which they protected their bodies against cold, wind, and rain? Whoever uses winter clothes in spring?

“It is the general belief that the Viceroy’s speech on the 1st of January, 1877, nullified to a considerable extent the Queen’s Proclamation of 1858. Babu Surendra Nath Bannerjee, because he gave expression to this belief at a meeting of the Calcutta Municipality, brought down upon himself the wrath of the *sahibs* (Europeans) who charged him with being disloyal. He who attempted to mar the spirit of the Queen’s Proclamation by a cloud of vague phrases, is regarded as a loyal politician, but if you understand the thing and venture to speak out plainly, you are looked upon as disloyal. Do the *sahibs* take us for such idiots as to think that we can be hushed to silence, because they bring



against us some bitter and unfounded accusations ?

“ We know very well when it behoves us to show our loyalty: we tore our bosoms and poured out our heart's blood to welcome the two Royal Princes who visited India. But what definition of loyalty are we to accept when we are frankly criticising the measures of Government ? The Viceroy spoke against the Queen's Proclamation and shall we say: ‘ No, the Viceroy said nothing against it. ’ Such insincere flattery is not loyalty...

“ It was declared in 1858 that, if the natives of the country proved themselves equal, all appointments so far as practicable would be given to them. But now we are told that all high executive offices are to be given to Englishmen only. If these two declarations are not contradictory, then henceforward there will be no difference in colour between black and white. If it amounts to disloyalty to point out this contradiction, and if for this, the Government chooses to punish us, then we with tens of millions of Her Majesty's subjects are prepared to be punished along with Surendra Nath.”

In another article headed “ The Final Decision in the Fenuah Cases,” we read:—

“ The people were hitherto proud of the justice administered in the High Court. In seeking to shield a rash, oppressive, and unprincipled European civilian, Government has now brought that Court into contempt, and struck a blow at the root of British justice. Government has thus worked its own ruin, and yet if after this, the people are found to express discontent, the Anglo-Indian editors will brand the Bengalees with such epithets as ungrateful, disloyal, scurrilous and what not.

“ Long ago we wrote about the Fenuah case. Our readers may remember that the *sahibs* of the factory wanted to have an embankment opened by force. The ryots resisted and they stretched themselves upon the *bund*. In order to frighten them, the *sahibs* fired blank cartridges but this proving of no effect,

bullets were regularly used. In the court, the ryots deposed that they saw a gun in the hands of the *Burra Sahib*. The *Burra Sahib*, however, in the deposition, said that he had no gun with him, but the *Chota Sahib* had one. A great confusion ensued. Those who said that the *Burra Sahib* had a gun with him were charged with perjury.

“As to the final judgment of the High Court in the case, it is observed that perhaps a decision so strange was never passed even in the most barbarous country in the world. It is first taken for granted that there has been no illegality in the proceedings, and then punishment is inflicted on a number of innocent persons on this supposition. There is not a doubt that the fame of British justice is gone for ever.”

The following article (20th September, 1877) from another paper, the *Bharat Mihir*, is equally interesting. It was published under the heading ‘Our Grief’.

“The *Sama Darpana* has taken leave for good. We make a few extracts below from what the Editor said when he bade farewell to his readers.

“If to teach loyalty to the public be the object of the Native newspapers then they may as well not exist at all, for people are already sufficiently loyal.

“If anybody says, there is not the slightest dissatisfaction in the country, not a single man’s face is sad, all are satisfied, all are happy, there is nothing to be said against the past acts of the Government, nothing against the present acts, then it will be our duty to reprobate such a man as a liar, as one who has not given a faithful representation of the actual state of things. And such a man is no friend of the English. What is the use of newspapers if they observe a certain state of feeling in the community at large and represent quite a different state of feelings before the Government or the public? Would it not be a misnomer to call newspapers the organs of the public, if the journalist could not

represent the grievances of the people in a free and unfettered manner ? Is it necessary to repeat *ad nauseam* that the English are our benefactors ? How often shall we abuse our loyalty by reiterating on every occasion when we discuss ( public questions ) that we are loyal ? What heart will not be pained to see the spectacle of educated natives crying for want of food, while every month, batches of Englishmen, fresh from England, are taking possession of all the appointments in the public service ? Or what political economy is this that would sanction the retention in the service of highly paid Europeans, while famine and destitution raged in the land and people groaned under the burden of taxation ? Why should Moola Bux be hanged for an offence for which Heeman receives only eighteen months' imprisonment ? Why should Surendra Nath be dismissed for a fault for which Jack or John receives promotion ? That you should despise me as a worthless thing not to be touched, while I should worship you with flowers and sandalwood, is a thing which nature never heard before. We are no fools, though we may be worthless in many respects. Having worshipped so long in the depths of our hearts the virtuous Victoria, we are at last told that we are disloyal. ”

Another article from the *Samprokash*, on the “ Way to Gag the Native Press ” ( 24th December, 1877 ) is equally instructive. The editor maintains that the Native Press will be automatically gagged if the Government adopts a more equitable policy.

“ The authorities should cease to make any distinction between black and white, the native and the foreigner, the conqueror and the conquered, and whether in the court, durbar or the council, should seek to regard all classes of the community with equal impartiality, enact equal laws, give them appointments of equal value, according to merit, and ability, award condign punishments to high-handed Europeans, whether official or non-official. If these measures be adopted, Mr. Eden will see that the mouth of the native press will be of itself stopped...

“ A magistrate, the other day, assaulted an unoffending

native, whose only fault was that he was washing his mouth when the officer passed by, and did not make his *salaam*. What punishment was even awarded to this Magistrate, and how is it that he has been left in charge of a district? So long as the authorities do not redress these wrongs, their utmost efforts to gag the Native Press will never be successful. Should they do this illegally and by force, another mouth will forthwith be opened. "

Another paper traces the growth of the drinking habit to the policy of the Government in a striking article. ( 10th March, 1877. )

" It chills one's blood ( literally dries one's blood ) to contemplate the terrible evils which drink is causing in our midst. Even immediately after the first arrival of the English in this country, there were hardly more than one or two gentlemen in any village who used to drink, and amongst the lower orders there was perhaps an individual here and there who would smoke *ganjah*. But they had a very bad repute in society. After this, when Government found that there was a very good means of gain in it, it began to encourage the liquor traffic. We have heard, and Dr. Wilson has clearly shown it in his report, that whereas there was only one liquor shop in Dacca before, there are a hundred now. Good Mussulmans and the Krishna-mantri Hindus considered it a sin even to touch wine; their descendants are now founders and protectors of grog-shops. Now-a-days, wine has become one of the principal articles of trade, and it has become the guardian divinity of every household. This wine is the index of the modern civilisation of the West. A person will not be honoured in the society of an educated man unless he has learned to drink. The number of drunkards is gradually increasing, both among Hindus and Mussulmans. Christians have been mainly instrumental in propagating a taste for wine. They themselves have not been ruined by it, but are accomplishing the ruin of others.....There is nothing else but drink which can do all sorts of injury, pecuniary, physical, and mental. We have some very influential men who died at a very premature age from the

effects of drinking; some other have become completely useless; and there are others who through the same cause are on the high road to ruin. Who will not be grieved at seeing the country in such a wretched state? The Government cannot do anything to prevent the evil until it consents to forego the profits it obtains from spirits and liquors.

“ It does not become the ruling powers to gain money by a means so detrimental to the interest of its subjects, and so opposed to humane principles of government.”<sup>4</sup>

These articles explain to some extent the attitude of the Government towards the Vernacular Press. But to us they are interesting because of the light they throw upon the currents of public opinion and feeling in those days. They clearly show that politics, both moderate and extremist, existed in the country long before these schools came into existence. The Press was doing in those days a first-class service both to the Government and to the people.

#### 4. LORD RIPON : HIS INFLUENCE.

If Lord Lytton played a prominent part in rousing the patriotism of the country and giving it a strong anti-British bias, Lord Ripon played an equally prominent part in stirring up popular feeling and giving it a strong pro-British bias. To understand the rise and working of the earliest nationalism in modern India, one has carefully to remember the factors which went to strengthen popular attachment to the British Government as well as the factors which went to cause a sort of discontent with the existing administration.

The popular attitude in the days of the Company was strongly anti-British. The creation of loyal India seemed an impossible dream to the rulers then. People openly rejoiced when the rumours of the destruction of the Company's Army in Afghanistan (1842) spread in the Indian bazaars. “ All India ”, wrote

Lord Metcalfe in 1824, "All India is at times looking out for our downfall. The people everywhere would rejoice at our destruction." In 1814, he wrote, "Our situation in India has always been precarious. We are still a handful of Europeans, governing an immense empire without any firm hold on the country, having warlike and powerful enemies on all our frontiers and the spirit of disaffection dormant, but rooted universally among our subjects. We might now be swept away in a single whirlwind. We are without root. The best affected natives would think of a change of Government with indifference, and in the North-Western Provinces, there is hardly a man who would not hope for benefit from such a change."

"Shall we ever," he again asked in 1820, "shall we ever contrive to attach the native population to our Government? And can this be done by identifying the interests of the upper classes with our own? Is it possible in any way to identify their interests with ours? To all three questions if put to me, I should answer No." <sup>5</sup>

But with the establishment of order and peace over all the country, all hopes in the native powers to re-establish their independence disappeared. This was the contribution of the Mutiny. Isolated dots of sovereignty struggling with each other disappeared. One single India emerged. The disloyalties of princes were converted into so many loyalties. Each power now imagined that the firmer its attachment to the central power, the greater its security: and it further felt that the greater the security of the central power, the greater its own resulting security.

The Pax Britannica was soon felt to be a great blessing to the people of India who had seen nothing but fight, anarchy, confusion, since the fall of the great Moghul. Education spread, and it also brought a keener realisation of the possibilities for good hitherto undreamt of, inherent in the new order. A reign of law had taken the place of a reign of terror: person and property became safe to a remarkable extent: and a cry

of ineffable relief went forth from the heart of the Indian people. B. C. Pal writes:—"In the sixties of the last century, even village urchins in distant and out of the way places used to cry out for protection from the British 'Company' when attacked by their playmates. "Dohai Company Bahadur" was a familiar cry in our rural parts in those days. Our educated people still remembered these traditions. Their professions of loyalty to the British Queen and the British Government were therefore absolutely sincere notwithstanding their criticism of the acts and policies of the Indian Government"<sup>6</sup>

The policy of conciliation announced in the Queen's Proclamation, went very far in soothing the lacerated soul of India after the Mutiny. The Proclamation became the one basis of the new creed of loyalty as well as patriotism. It was the one source of inspiration to the troubled soul of educated India. The heart of the newly educated Indian further responded with enthusiasm to the new ideals so eloquently preached by men like Burke and Macaulay. The whole modern Congress movement, upto 1905, is nothing but a perpetual appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober, from the actualities of British administration in India to the beautiful principles and visions embodied in English political literature. Burke and Bright, Macaulay and Gladstone were the masters at whose feet the Indian politicians learnt all their politics. They were names to conjure with: their speeches and writings became the political Bible of our intelligentsia for nearly two generations. Men read and re-read every word which came from them. Men built their hopes and their aspirations upon them. No wonder that a whole generation of Indian nationalists was loyalist to the core in spite of their very vigorous criticism of the acts and policy of the bureaucracy.

The movement of Great Britain and then of the Colonies in the direction of democracy touched Indian mind deeply. If England moved under the pressure of facts more and more towards the realisation of popular government, why could not India? The lessons of constitutional development of England went into the

heart of the Indian politician. The tradition of liberty slowly broadening down from precedent to precedent, of ordered progress, of bloodless revolutions, was transmitted by English education to our politicians and became an inseparable part of their consciousness. If Canada or Australia got what she wanted by persistent pressure, why could not India, by having recourse to the same method, obtain the same results? Did not the native English heart rejoice in the emancipation of down-trodden people everywhere? Would it not equally rejoice in the rise of Indians to manhood in their own good time? Had not England been the classic home of liberty where patriots from various countries at one time or other, had found a home and refuge? Pondering deeply over all these facts, and taking their lessons completely to heart, the Indian politician said with Cowper, "England, with all thy faults I love thee still!"

In India, the Government was also being slowly recast to suit Indian needs. The advent of a Liberal Government in Great Britain always raised high hopes among Indians. The policy of Lord Lytton was the policy of Lord Salisbury and Lord Beaconsfield. In 1880, Gladstone came into power. "When Mr. Gladstone came into office in 1880," wrote Blunt, "he found himself at the head of an immense majority in the House of Commons, pledged to the ideas of liberty in the East, of which he had himself been the foremost preacher. With regard to India, he had formulated the Liberal creed in a single sentence. "Our title to India," he had said, "depends on the first condition, that our being there is profitable to the Indian nation, and on a second condition that we can make them see and understand it to be profitable." Lord Ripon was chosen to carry out this policy.

The concrete achievements of Lord Ripon's Viceroyalty may not be very substantial, but there was no mistake as regards his attitude. His Ilbert Bill failed, but the determination gradually to do away with invidious racial differences was there, and it was this which endeared him to the popular imagination. The more official and non-official Englishmen



opposed him, the more did the people of India love him. It will not be an exaggeration if we say that he has been the only national Viceroy we had, because he became one of the national heroes in those days. People were hungering for some one in the Government to understand them and to represent them, and they found in Lord Ripon one who meant to do his very best for the country. The old pledges were there, but it was reserved for Lord Ripon to show that they were not idle pledges. The people found out that the British Government too had a heart and a conscience; and their faith in the eventual fulfilment of the promises of the Raj became stronger than ever. Lord Ripon thus became the sheet-anchor of the people's loyalty as well as patriotism, and the moderate politicians were never tired of referring to his great name again and again all through the early Congress years. Here is the evidence of Pundit Malaviya. Speaking as President of the Indian National Congress (1909) he said: "Lord Ripon was loved and respected by educated Indians as I believe no Englishman who has ever been connected with India, excepting the Father of the Indian National Congress, Mr. Allan Octavian Hume, and Sir William Wedderburn, has been loved and respected. He was loved, because he made the most courageous attempt to act up to the spirit of the noble Proclamation of 1858, to obliterate race-distinctions, and to treat his Indian fellow-subjects as standing on a footing of equality with their European fellow-subjects. He was respected, because he was a God-fearing man and showed by his conduct in the exalted office he filled as Viceroy of India, that he believed in the truth of the teaching that righteousness exalteth a nation. He was loved, because he was a type of the noblest of Englishmen, who have an innate love of justice, and who wish to see the blessings of liberty which they themselves enjoy extended to all their fellow-countrymen." <sup>8</sup>

The repeal of the Vernacular Press Act and his support of the Ilbert's Bill clearly revealed the inner intentions of Lord Ripon, and his Local Self-Government Act was meant to lay the foundation of National Self-Government in India in future Indian

educated opinion had begun to demand some share in the Government, and this Act met the aspirations of the people to some extent. The most striking thing about Lord Ripon was the principle which he enunciated, that efficiency is not the only ideal of Government but that Self-Government was an even more important ideal. He said that "as education advanced, there was rapidly growing up an intelligent class of public-spirited men, whom it was not only bad policy, but sheer waste of power, to fail to utilise." But he specially emphasised the value of local self-government as "an instrument of political and popular education."

Here then was something upon which the Indian politicians could build their hopes and aspirations. It was said "that this declaration of a great policy was an open invitation to those who were working for the uplift of their country to co-operate with the Government for its realisation."

There was no great change in the structure of the Government, and yet the whole atmosphere changed because of the new note struck by Lord Ripon.

##### 5. LORD LYTTON: RISE OF ANTI-BRITISH FEELING.

Indians were therefore receiving valuable lessons in the art of modern politics during the two viceroyalties of Lord Lytton and Lord Ripon. Lord Lytton's reactionary measures had already roused the country from her stupor. "The wanton invasion of Cabul...followed by the second Afghan War, the large increase of the army under the hallucinations of the Russian bugbear, the costly establishment of a 'scientific frontier', the complete disarming of an inoffensive and helpless population, although the Eurasians were left untouched, the gagging of the vernacular press, the sacrifice of the import cotton duties as a Conservative sop to Lanchashire",<sup>10</sup> these events followed in quick succession and stirred up profound misgivings in the minds of the educated

classes as to the direction in which the Empire was moving.

The Delhi Durbar was held in 1877. A terrible famine was raging in the country at the time, causing veritable havoc among the people. A Calcutta newspaper remarked with reference to the costly pageant of 1877 that "Nero was fiddling while Rome was burning." But the Durbar, while it was meant to be a demonstration of Indian loyalty on a large scale, suggested to the Indian mind the possibility of bringing together in one place the representatives of the different parts of India. The Durbar raised in theory the status of the Queen's Indian subjects, who now became citizens of the British Empire. Many prominent men—Surendranath Bannerjee, Vishvanath Mandlik, Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy—were present at the function, and the idea suggested itself to them that "if the princes and nobles in the land could be forced to form a pageant for the glorification of an autocratic Viceroy, why could not the people be gathered together to unite themselves to restrain by constitutional means and methods the spirit of autocratic rule?"<sup>11</sup> The idea of a united India thus emerged as an unconscious by-product of the Durbar.

The agitation which the Anglo-Indians organised against the Ilbert Bill was equally a blessing in disguise. Politics became openly a racial conflict between the whites and the non-whites, and a lot of mud was thrown by both sides. The Babu was called a "low class hybrid". The outbursts of the infuriated Europeans were thoroughly characteristic. "Shall we be judged by the nigger?" "Shall he send us to jail?" "Shall he be put in authority over us? Never! It is impossible! Better that British rule in India should end than that we should be obliged to submit to such humiliating laws."<sup>12</sup> The agitation taught three lessons to Indians: that racial insolence was a very powerful fact in the situation, that a successful organisation could work wonders, and that the Government established by law also could be set at defiance, if need be, by a widespread agitation in India. The cleavage between the conquerors and the conquered was a hard fact, and even Lord Ripon had to bow to it. And if the Anglo-

Indians could themselves successfully organise and defy the Viceroy, why could not the Indians do the same? Thus the Indians learnt the "A.B.C. of seditious agitation" at the hands of their British masters.

The Platform now begins to be an equally important instrument of political propaganda as the Press. In 1876, the Indian Association was started in Calcutta in order to create and organise public opinion on vital matters. Surendranath Bannerjee was one of its moving spirits. The first problem which faced it was the question of the Civil Service Examination. The age limit for that examination was reduced in 1877 from twenty-one to nineteen. This was regarded as a deliberate attempt to shut out as many Indians as possible. The agitation started in Calcutta and spread all over the country. Surendranath Bannerjee on behalf of the Association, toured round the country and tried to create a common platform on the basis of a common grievance. Such was the beginning of an all-India political agitation in the country. The credit of giving the lead to the whole country in political, as in social and religious reform, belongs undoubtedly to Bengal, and Surendranath Bannerjee was one of our early national heroes. Sir Henry Cotton wrote in his *New India* : "The Bengalee Babus now rule public opinion from Peshawar to Chittagong...A quarter of a century ago there was no trace of this; the idea of any Bengalee influence in the Punjab would have been a conception incredible to Lord Lawrence, to a Montgomery or a Macleod; yet it is the case that during the past year the tour of a Bengalee lecturer, lecturing in English in Upper India, assumed the character of a triumphal progress; and at the present moment, the name of Surendranath Bannerjee excites as much admiration among the rising generation of Multan as in Dacca."<sup>1</sup>

The Indian Association started its next campaign against the Vernacular Press Act of Lord Lytton. Numerous political associations now started all over Bengal and took up the cry. Thus we witness the birth of political consciousness all over the country especially among the middle classes.

The Ilbert Bill intensified this feeling among the Indians, and the whole country rallied round Lord Ripon in a way unparalleled in the political annals of modern India. The country became mad with excitement. People gave him addresses and in many cases unharnessed the horses from his carriage. The Anglo-Indian was stirred deeply at this novel demonstration. "If it be real, what does it mean?" exclaimed Sir Auckland Colvin in a pamphlet which created sensation. "The dry bones in the open valley," he said, "had become instinct with life."<sup>14</sup>

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## 6. BIRTH OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.

The time was thus ripe for the foundation of an All-India political organisation like the Indian National Congress. These demonstrations undoubtedly marked the beginning of a new era of patriotism and co-operation in the country. In 1875 were the British Indian Association and the Indian Association in Bombay, we had the Bombay Association started by Jagannath Sankar Seth and Dadabhai Naoroji. The Poona Sabha was started in Poona during the seventies by K. T. Telang and others. But these associations mostly dealt with local politics.

India politics

The idea of a national gathering was mooted in Calcutta in 1882. But the credit of giving it final bodily shape goes to Hume. Mr. A. O. Hume had retired in 1882 from the post of a Secretary to Government. He had the experience of thirty-three years' service and had acquired a very intimate knowledge both of the government and the people. His democratic instincts convinced him that 'to dig an overt and constitutional channel for the discharge of the increasing ferment' was the only remedy. In 1883, he addressed an open letter to the graduates of the Calcutta University, the sincerity and outspokenness of which leave no doubt in our minds as regards his motives:—

"Constituting as you do, a large body of the most highly educated Indians, you should, in the natural order of things, con-

stitute also the most important source of all mental, moral, social and political progress in India. Whether in the individual or the nation, all vital progress must spring from within, and it is to you her most cultured and enlightened minds, her most favoured sons, that your country must look for the initiative.

"Scattered individuals, however capable and however willing, are powerless singly. What is needed is union, organisation, and a well-defined line of action, and to secure these, an association is required, armed and organised with unusual care, having for its object to promote the mental, moral, social and political regeneration of the people of India. Our little army must be *sui generis* in discipline and equipment, and the question simply is, how many of you will prove to possess, in addition to your high scholastic attainments, the unselfishness, moral courage, self-control, and active spirit of benevolence which are essential in all who should enlist."

"As I said before, you are the salt of the land. And if amongst you, the élite, fifty men cannot be found with sufficient power of self-sacrifice, sufficient love for and pride in their country, sufficient genuine and unselfish heartfelt patriotism to take the initiative, and if needs be, devote the rest of their lives to the cause, then there is no hope for India. Her sons must and will remain mere humble and helpless instruments in the hands of foreign rulers, for 'they who would be free themselves must strike the blow.'

"Every nation secures precisely as good a government as it merits...Men know how to act. Let there be no more complaints of Englishmen being preferred to you in all important offices, for if you lack that public spirit, that highest form of altruistic devotion that leads men to subordinate private ease to the public weal, that true patriotism that has made Englishmen what they are, then rightly are these preferred to you and rightly and inevitably have they become your rulers. And rulers and taskmasters they must continue, let the yoke gall your shoulders

## 168 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

ever so sorely, until you realise and stand prepared to act upon the eternal truth, whether in the case of individuals or nations, that self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfailing guides to freedom and happiness."<sup>15</sup>

This document is the parent of Congress agitation. It breathes such a fine spirit of liberty and patriotism that it goes straight to the heart. It emphasises the spirit of self-reliance which is the embodiment not only of the earlier movement, but is the basis of the later movement as well. It points out the necessity of a national consolidation of all thought and effort in the interests of national progress. Mr. Hume's passion for liberty and for the Indian cause inspired every line that he wrote here. This passionate appeal has been well compared to St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, "in the deep pathos and fervid eloquence, no less than in its burning zeal and warm sympathy."<sup>16</sup>

It is true that the idea of a national union was already in the air. Circumstances had made the country ready for it. It had been already in the process of being worked out in Bengal. It was discussed at an informal meeting of the Theosophical Convention at Madras. In this sense it is true, as Mr. Rushbrook Williams says: "Neither Indians nor Englishmen can claim to be its sole creators." But if one man deserves the credit of initiating the movement, that man was undoubtedly Mr. Hume.

A controversy has raged round the motives of Hume in starting this movement. What was required was extreme daring and extreme caution. Mr. Hume had to some extent both. That he was not an Indian was positively an advantage in those days. "No Indian," said Gokhale, "could have started the Indian National Congress."<sup>17</sup> A high English official naturally commanded great weight not only with the official class, but also with the conservative and timid sections of the Indian public. The only handicaps were that, being a non-Indian, his motives were liable to mis-interpretation at the hands of the radical section of Indians. But it is much to the credit of Mr. Hume that he was able to con-

vince even the sceptical extremist of the sincerity of his intentions.

If the Congress was to see the light of day, it was very necessary to move very slowly and cautiously. It was necessary to disarm the active opposition of the Government and, if possible, to enlist its support. True, it is difficult, nay impossible, to play this double rôle successfully for a long time. If you try to please the Government, you cannot please at any rate the extremist sections of the people, and if you try to meet the wishes of the latter, you are sure to encounter the wrath of the powers that be. This has been one of the ever-recurring dilemmas of Indian public life, and the Congress also found it to its cost, that it could not but displease one or the other party, and eventually, it may be, both.

Mr. Hume was keen on securing official support and he thought of starting a National Union rather for social reform than for political reform. He consulted Lord Dufferin who had just come out to India as Viceroy, and evolved the scheme of a political association largely under the influence of Lord Dufferin. If this is true, and there are reasons for believing it to be true, the ultimate credit or discredit of making the first move in the direction of starting the Congress belongs to an English Viceroy. Mr. W. C. Bannerjee wrote in 1898 in his 'Introduction to Indian Politics': "It will probably be news to many that the Indian National Congress, as it was originally started and it has since been carried on, is in reality the work of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava when that nobleman was the Governor-General of India...He said (to Hume) there was no body of persons in this country who performed the work which Her Majesty's opposition did in England. The newspapers, if they really represented the views of the people, were not reliable, and as the English were necessarily ignorant of what was thought of them and their policy in native circles, it would be very desirable in their interests as well as in the interests of the ruled that Indian politicians should meet yearly and point out to the Government in what respects the administration was defective, and how it could be improved, and he added that an assembly such as he proposed



should not be presided over by the Local Governor, for in his presence the people might not like to speak out their minds."<sup>18</sup> Mr. Hume then placed Lord Dufferin's scheme and his own before the leading politicians of the country and the latter unanimously accepted Lord Dufferin's scheme. Sir William Wedderburn supports this statement. "Indeed, in initiating the National Movement, Mr. Hume took counsel with the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, and whereas he was himself disposed to begin his reform propaganda on the social side, it was apparently by Lord Dufferin's advice that he took up the work of political organisation as the first matter to be dealt with" <sup>19</sup>

It is true that Hume in his correspondence with Sir Auckland Colvin had to give the Congress the best colour he could from the Government point of view. He saw that danger was brewing in the country and that if it did not find a regular outlet in some such body as the Congress, it did not bode any good to the safety of the Empire. He said that "no choice was left to those who gave the primary impetus to the movement. The ferment due to the creation of Western ideas, education, invention and appliances, was at work with a rapidly increasing intensity, and it became of paramount importance to find for its products an overt and constitutional channel for discharge, instead of leaving them to fester as they had already commenced to do, under the surface." He continued that "from the most important point of view, the future maintenance of the integrity of the British Empire, the real question, when the Congress started, was not, is it premature, but is it too late, and will the country now accept it?" <sup>20</sup>

Mr. F.

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Thus was born the premier non-official political organisation in the country, called the Indian National Congress. The men who dominated the Congress from 1885 to 1905 were the first political leaders of the country. There are great names in the early history of the Congress, Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir William Wedderburn, Hume, Sir Henry Cotton, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, W. C. Bannerjee, Surendranath Bannerjee, Anand Charlu, Budro-

odin Tyabji, Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Telang, Anand Mohan Bose, Lal Mohan Ghose, A. C. Mazumdar, Bhupendranath Basu, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Pundit Bishan Narayan Dhar, C. Vijayaraghavachariar, R. C. Dutt, Sankaran Nair, Mr (later Lord) Sinha, Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh, Gokhale and many others. Dadabhai Naoroji is regarded unanimously as the father of Indian national life. Up to 1905 or 1906 his was the dominating figure in the Congress. His touching simplicity, his unquestionable sincerity, and his burning patriotism raised him above all factions and made him both in name and in fact the "Grand Old Man" of India. Surendranath Bannerjee and Pherozeshah Mehta were all along the guiding spirits of the Moderate Party in India. But the man to whom we must give the credit for being the foremost and best-equipped spokesman of the party in theory as well as in practice, was undoubtedly Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale. His selfless life and his remarkably lucid speeches give us a full insight into the working of the higher mind of the earlier representatives of India's political struggles and aspirations.

## 7. THE OBJECTIVE.

↓ The advocates of the Indian cause in those days advanced very cautiously. But even they could not remain altogether stationary, and towards the end of the first phase of India's new effort, they laid down the goal of her political striving in no uncertain terms.

↓ The evolution of Indian political life under the British clearly shows that only one aim has been steadily kept in view by the Indian politicians. There is an underlying unity of purpose which binds together organically, India's earliest efforts with her latest strivings. It has been one long drift towards democracy ↑ This goal has been implicit from the beginning, and as events developed, the politicians were driven to make it clear first to themselves and then to the outside world.

In the manifesto issued by the leaders in March, 1885,

## 172 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

we read:—

“ A Conference of the Indian National Union will be held at Poona from the 25th to the 31st December, 1885.

“ This Conference will be composed of delegates—leading politicians, well acquainted with the English language from all parts of the Bengal, Bombay and Madras Presidency.

“ The direct objects of the Conference will be (i) to enable all the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other; (ii) to discuss and decide upon political operations to be undertaken during the ensuing year.

“ Indirectly, this Conference will form the germ of a native Parliament, and, if properly conducted, will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is wholly unfit for any form of representative institution.”<sup>21</sup>

↓ The object in the beginning was to create the germ of a truly representative all-India gathering.↑ The different leaders in various parts of India had to be brought together in one place for a few days in a year, in order that they might know each other, exchange views, talk, discuss, deliberate and arrive at certain common conclusions with regard to India's problems. ↓ W. C. Bannerjee, the first President of the Congress, also laid down the objects of the Congress under four heads: (a) the promotion of personal intimacy among the national workers; (b) the eradication by direct personal intercourse of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices among all lovers of our country, and the further development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in their well-beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign; (3) the formulation of the matured conclusions of the thinkers after careful discussion on Indian problems, and lastly, (4) the determination of the lines of work for the next year.<sup>22</sup>

It was certainly very wise of those leaders to concentrate their attention upon the training and the organisation of public opinion, of one common mind on all important Indian questions. The Congress was not to be necessarily a pro-British or anti-British body; it was to be a training-ground for representative institutions in future for the Indian intelligentsia. Its mission was humble, but none the less very important; and it stuck to its mission faithfully for all these years. There was no unity in the country except what the Government brought with it, and the whole task of the Indian politicians was to convert this external unity imposed to some extent by force into an internal unity of thought, will, and feeling, evolved from within by the nation's own efforts. The leaders were cautious, but they did not lack the vision and they referred to the Congress being the germ of the future Indian Parliament.

↓ In the second Congress, an important declaration was made, sharply differentiating the political questions which concerned all the people of India alike, from the social problems of different communities. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji took up a bold line and made the Congress and the Indian Liberal Party a purely political body, not directly concerned as such with the social problems of the different communities. Each community had its own social problems; and the social problems of one were not necessarily the social problems of the others. What did a Parsee, for example, know about the Hindu inner life, or a Hindu know about the Parsee inner life? Then there would be resentment on the part of each community, if there were an attempt to meddle with it by an outside body. But above all, the country wanted to create unity and not fresh divisions; it was advisable, therefore, to consider the problems in which all were equally interested rather than those which tended to create fresh conflicts. "If you blame us for ignoring these (social reforms), you should equally blame the House of Commons for not discussing the abstruser problems of mathematics or metaphysics. A National Congress must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation has a direct partici-

## 174 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

pation, and it must leave the adjustment of social reforms and other class questions to class congresses."<sup>23</sup>

↓ The Congress kept before itself two ideals,<sup>1</sup> and as its circle of influence widened and the political consciousness increased in the country, it passed gradually from the one to the other. ↓ The first ideal was the ideal of good government, and the second one of a modified type of self-government.<sup>↑</sup> In 1899, we find it laid down in the Rules of the Congress Constitution:—"The object of the Indian National Congress shall be to promote by constitutional means the interests of the well-being of the people of the Indian Empire."

✓ But the idea of gradual attainment of fuller and fuller freedom was always there. Mr. George Yule, the President of the fourth Congress, suggested that the Indians had become adolescent politically, although they had not attained political maturity. They had had the feeding-bottle long enough; they did not want the strong meat of full age, but they desired to be weaned politically. They desired to emerge from "a darkened room" not into the full blaze of day, but into a stage of more light.<sup>24</sup>

↘ Slowly driven by the pressure of circumstance, the Congress began to demand a modified form of self-government.<sup>¶</sup> In 1905, Gokhale presided over the Congress, and in his Presidential speech declared: "The goal of the Congress is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves, and that, in course of time, a form of government should be attained in this country similar to what exists in the self-governing colonies of the British Empire."<sup>25</sup> ↑

↘ The Liberals always recognised that (a) the movement towards the ideal must be a slow one, and that by progressive stages India had to reach the ideal; and (b) that the highest political development India should aspire to, was within the framework of the British Empire. ¶ Thus Gokhale continues: "For better or for worse, our destinies are now linked with those of England, and the Congress fully recognises that whatever advance we seek

must be within the Empire itself. That advance, moreover, can only be gradual, as at each stage of the progress, it may be necessary for us to pass through a brief course of apprenticeship before we are enabled to go to the next one; for it is a reasonable proposition that the state of responsibility required for the proper exercise of the political institutions of the West can be acquired by an Eastern people through practical training and experiment only."<sup>26</sup> ↑

↓ In 1906, Dadabhai Naoroji, as the President of the Congress, put the seal on the matter, by declaring bluntly that Swaraj or Self-Government was the goal of all India's political striving "Just as the administration of the United Kingdom in all services, departments, and details is in the hands of the people themselves of the country, so should we in India claim that the administration in all services, departments and details should be in the hands of the people themselves of India....."

"As in the United Kingdom and the colonies, all taxation and legislation and the power of spending the taxes are in the hands of the representatives of the people of these countries, so should also be the rights of the people of India." He added that "the whole matter can be compressed in one word, "self-government" or "Swaraj", like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies."<sup>27</sup> ↑

The whole political history of India during these years is significantly expressed in this transition from the moderate demand of a better government to the more radical demand of Swaraj.

## 8. LOYALTY TO THE BRITISH CONNECTION.

↓ Loyalty to the British masters was one of the fundamental articles of the Liberals' creed. ↑ It is interesting to inquire into the nature of this loyalty and the sources from which it is derived. The Indians had just come under the magic influence of the beautiful ideals enshrined in English literature and English history. The spell of the West was fully upon them. The names of Burke and Macaulay, Gladstone and Morley,

## 176 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

or Carlyle and Emerson, were music to their ears. A new world of thought had been just opened to them; and they felt intoxicated, they felt giddy under its influence. Our young men are steeped in the early years of their lives in these English influences and they can no more be disloyal to them than they can be disloyal to themselves. They speak English more fluently very often than they speak their mother tongue, and sometimes they think and dream in English. There was thus a deep, passionate appreciation of Western culture and a desperate desire to cling to it at all costs. Intellectual life had become inconceivable without the West. In the Fourth Congress we hear: "We look upon it as our national Government; English is our *lingua franca*; of English institutions we have become deeply enamoured; and as we have been trained upon lines peculiarly British, we cannot do ought but ask for privileges of British citizenship"<sup>28</sup>.

Here we are told that the English Government is our national government and English language is our national language. In a sense this was literally true. The Government was national in the sense of being an all-India Government, and the language was national in the sense of being an all-India language. The educated liberals instinctively feared that with the disappearance of the English Government or the English language, India might lapse back into its old particularistic grooves. Hence the delight with which they clung to both. English was the language of the Congress; it was the language in which they heard their political leaders deliver their political message. Raja Ram Mohun Roy became common property because his works had partly been written in English, and leaders like Surendranath Bannerjee could instal themselves in the popular imagination because they spoke in eloquent English. Here is one of Surendranath Bannerjee's rhetorical tributes to the English: he said that the English civilization was "the noblest which the world has ever seen, the emblem of indissoluble union between England and India,—a civilization fraught with unspeakable renown to the English name."<sup>29</sup>.

The Indian political mind heartily welcomed the rise and

growth under the British of free institutions. To be disloyal to these institutions, which carried with them untold possibilities for the growth of the nation, was impossible for the Indians. ↑ Their heart's desire was for more of these institutions and not less. Surendranath Bannerjee burst out in his peroration at Poona: "To England we look for inspiration and guidance. To England we look for sympathy in the struggle. From England must come the crowning mandate which will enfranchise our peoples. England is our political guide and moral preceptor in the exalted sphere of political duty. English history has taught us those principles of freedom which we cherish with our life blood. We have been fed upon the strong food of English Constitutional freedom. We have been taught to admire the eloquence and genius of the great masters of English political philosophy. We have been brought face to face with the struggles and the triumphs of the English people in their stately march towards constitutional freedom. Where will you find better models of courage, devotion, and sacrifice: not in Rome, not in Greece, not even in France, in the stormy days of the Revolution—courage tempered by caution, partnership softened by a large hearted charity, enthusiasm leavened by sobriety—all subordinated to the one predominating sense of love of country and love of God" <sup>30</sup>

✓ The whole political literature of this period in India is permeated with a deep sense of gratitude for the innumerable blessings of the British Raj. Dadabhai Naoroji removed all ambiguity about the loyalty of the Indian mind in the second Congress. "Let us speak out like men and proclaim that we are loyal to the backbone; that we understand the benefits English rule has conferred upon us; that we thoroughly appreciate the education that has been given to us, the new light which has been poured upon us, turning us from darkness into light and teaching us the new lesson that kings are made for the people and not the people for their kings; and the new lesson we have learned amidst the darkness of despotism only by the light of free English civilization." <sup>31</sup> Gokhale summed up briefly the achievements



## 178 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

of the British: "I am aware that much good has been done by England in India in certain directions. The Western type of the administrative machinery has been substituted in place of what we once had. The country enjoys now uninterrupted peace and order. Justice, though costly, is fairly dispensed, as between Indian and Indian... Then you have introduced Western education, with freedom of speech and freedom of writing. These are all things that stand to your credit."<sup>32</sup>

There was thus a full measure of a very lively appreciation of all the good that the British did in India, consciously or unconsciously. But gratitude does not merely mean recognition of things done: it is also an expectation of favours to come. The Liberals indeed were very discreet; they had to take the ship of India's cause through uncharted waters to its destination, and they were fully conscious of the rocks ahead. They knew that the Government would not tolerate an openly seditious movement in India. The plant of India's freedom was still very delicate and the slightest adverse blast might nip it in the bud. Hence the more patriotic they were, the more loyal they became.<sup>33</sup> Their patriotism was born out of their loyalty; but it is more true to say that their loyalty was born out of their patriotism. Partly, therefore, this new religion of loyalty-cum-patriotism was the outcome of caution, of a strong sense of actualities of the political situation. In every sentence in which they referred to the cause of their country, they added a qualification, assuring the Government of their loyalty. In fact, the ideal of the Liberal party in India was and has always been to unite the highest patriotic devotion to the country with an equally enthusiastic attachment to the Crown.

But this attitude was not merely a diplomatic trick; it was not a mere pose, dictated by prudence or necessity. It was the outcome of their vivid appreciation of not only the actual good that was being done by the British, but above all, the enormous possibilities which the Government revealed to the wondering gaze of the Indian moderates. The highest aspiration which they

cherished was to be full British citizens, not only in name, but also in fact. ↑ They always felt that there was the finger of God in the advent of the British. Gokhale even called the connection with the British a Providential dispensation. We will give three witnesses who expressed the same fact in slightly different ways.

Dadabhai Naoroji in the Presidential Address (1886) replying to the charge of disloyalty asked: "Is this Congress a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British Government? Or is it another stone in the foundation of the stability of that Government? The assemblage of such a Congress is an event of the utmost importance in Indian History. I ask whether in the most glorious days of Hindu rule, in the days of Rajas like the great Vikram, you could imagine the possibility of a meeting of this kind, where even Hindus of all different provinces of the kingdom could have collected and spoken as one nation. Coming down to the later Empire of our friends the Mahomedans, even in the days of the great Akbar himself, would it have been possible for a meeting like this to assemble, composed of all classes and communities, all speaking one language, and all having uniform and high aspirations of their own. Such a thing is possible and possible under the British Rule only."<sup>33</sup>

1 ↓ Mahadeo Govind Ranade discovers a great moral purpose in each of the foreign conquests of India. Each invasion has tended to serve as a discipline of our chosen race and led the nation to a higher ideal. The British connection is the climax of this process of education, because the British are the most gifted and free nation in the world. ↑ "Both Hindus and Mahomedans lack many of the virtues represented by the love of order and regulated authority. Both are wanting in the love of municipal freedom, in the exercise of virtues necessary for civic life, and in aptitudes for mechanical skill, in the love of science and research, in the love of daring and adventurous discovery, the resolution to master difficulties, and in chivalrous respect for womankind. Neither the old Hindu nor the old Mahomedan civilization was in a

condition to train these virtues in a way to bring up the races of India on a level with those of Western Europe, and so the work of education had to be renewed."<sup>34</sup> Britain then has a divine mission in the East. "The *rationale* of British rule in India is its capacity and providential purpose of fostering the political education of the country on the largest scale in civil and public activities."<sup>35</sup>

Surendranath Bannerjee in one of the most eloquent passages in Congress literature (1895), gives a classical expression to the faith of the Liberals in the magnificent promise of the British Raj. "The noblest heritage which we can leave to our children and our children's children is the heritage of enlarged rights, safeguarded by the loyal devotion and the fervent enthusiasm of an emancipated people. Let us so work with confidence in each other, with unwavering loyalty to the British connection, that we may accomplish this great object within a measurable distance of time. Then will the Congress have fulfilled its mission—justified the hopes of those who formed it and who worked for it—not indeed by the supersession of the British rule in India, but by broadening its basis, liberalising its spirit, ennobling its character, and placing it upon the unchallengable foundations of a nation's affections. It is not severance that we look forward to—but unification, permanent embodiment as an integral part of that great Empire which has given the rest of the world the models of free institutions—that is what we aim at. But permanence means assimilation, incorporation, equal rights, equal privileges. England is the august mother of free nations. She has covered the world with free States. Places hitherto the chosen abode of barbarism, are now the home of freedom. Wherever floats the flag of England, there free Governments have been established. We appeal to England gradually to change the character of her rule in India, to liberalise it, to shift its foundations, to adapt it to the newly developed environments of the country and the people, so that in the fulness of time, India may find its place in the great confederacy of free States, English in their origin, English in their character, English in their institutions, rejoicing in their permanent and

indissoluble union with England, a glory to the mother country and an honour to the human race. Then will England have fulfilled her great mission in the East, accomplished her high destiny among the Nations, repaid the long-standing debt which the West owes to the East, and covered herself with imperishable renown and everlasting glory.”<sup>36</sup>

#### 9. THE METHOD-CONSTITUTIONAL AGITATION.

↓ How is the goal to be achieved? It is easy enough to enumerate the aim of all political life in India, but the real difficulty centres round the methods which will bring the people of India nearer and nearer the realisation of their hopes. The Indian Liberals saw that there was no royal road to the attainment of political salvation. But they never doubted the efficacy of the one instrument viz. constitutional agitation. ↑

What is constitutional agitation? Gokhale marked out a very wide sphere for it in a passage which is now often conveniently ignored. “Constitutional agitation,” he said, “was agitation by methods which they were entitled to adopt to bring about the changes they desired through the action of constitutional authorities. Thus defined, the field of constitutional agitation was a very wide one. Three things were excluded: rebellion, aiding or abetting a foreign invasion, and resort to crime. Roughly speaking, barring these three things, all else was constitutional. No doubt, everything that was constitutional was not wise or expedient. But that was a different matter. Prayers and appeals to justice lay at one end. Passive resistance, including even its extreme form of non-payment of taxes till redress was obtained, lay at the other end.”<sup>37</sup>

↓ Gokhale ruled out as inadmissible and absurd the idea of attaining the goal, independently of the authorities. The object of constitutional agitation is to bring as much pressure as possible upon the governing authorities. The fundamental factor is the creation of a strong and determined public opinion in the country: ↓

the leaders therefore, should direct their attention more and more to the building up of such an opinion. This was the object of all agitation—the building up of the strength of our own people. To this end all our efforts should be directed. In the first place, we should unite all the different sections of the Hindu community and then bring about a union between the Hindus and the Mahomedans. Secondly, we should try to raise the level of our national character, making it firm of purpose and disciplined in action; thirdly, we should create and diffuse as widely as possible a common national consciousness among our people, enabling them to transcend the differences of race, and class, and caste.

It is true that the high hopes raised at the time of the inauguration of the Congress were not all realised; but is there any justification for despair? The work which Congress agitation has accomplished has not been negligible. The Congress had been of enormous value in nation-building. Summing up the achievements of the Congress, Gokhale said; "The minds of the people have been familiarised with the idea of a united India working for her salvation; a national public opinion has been created; close bonds of sympathy now knit together the different provinces, castes and creeds hamper less and less the pursuit of common aims; the dignity of a consciousness of national existence has spread over the whole land. Our record of political concessions won is, no doubt, very meagre, but those that have been secured are of very considerable value, some retrogression has been prevented, and if latterly we have been unable to stem the tide of reaction, the resistance we have offered, though it has failed of its avowed purpose, has substantially strengthened our public life. Our deliberations have extended over a very wide range of problems; public opinion in the country is, in consequence, better informed, and the press is steadily growing in authority and usefulness. Above all, there is a general perception now of the goal towards which we have to strive and a wide recognition of the arduous character of the struggle and the immense sacrifices it requires."<sup>38</sup>

The Indian Liberal realised that the problem facing him was one of the most complicated ones that ever faced the leaders of men. It was certainly bound to be a very formidable business in India, because there were special circumstances which rendered a difficult task a hundred times more difficult. The nature of the goal and the character of the means to be employed in the attainment of the goal were determined for him by his full appreciation of the so many hard factors in India's political situation. Patience, infinite patience, was naturally considered by him absolutely essential; for he realised that the struggle was bound to be a very long and weary one. No one realised better than these Indian politicians that there are no short cuts to the realisation of political ideals. But they did not despair. There was a touching religious faith in their attitude which cannot but move us even to-day. In a letter to an Englishman, we find Gokhale expressing himself a little more unreservedly about the nature of the Indian political problem. "Our problem," he writes, "is indeed an enormously difficult one—I sometimes think that no country in the world was ever called upon to face such a problem as ours. Endless divisions and sub-divisions in the country, the bulk of the population ignorant, and clinging with a tenacity to the old modes of thought and sentiment, which are averse to all change and do not understand change, seventy millions of Mahomedans more or less hostile to national aspirations and all power lodged in the hands of a fleeting body of foreign officials most of whom represent your Tory principles at their worst—this is the situation to-day. Out of this mass, an India has to be evolved, strong, free, united, democratic and qualified generally to take her proper place among the nations of the world. It is a task that may well appal and I don't know if it ever will be accomplished. But we can all work for that end, and after all, there is much in the words of one of your most beautiful hymns:—'One step enough for me.'"<sup>39</sup>

A violent cataclysm was out of the question. The Indian problem was not to be solved by such methods. The goal would be reached only by slow and steady movement, it was

## 184 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

no use, therefore, giving way to despair or to impatience with the progress so far made. Bold and heroic methods might appeal to the imagination of an impatient political idealist, but the Indian Liberal took his stand on solid fact and refused to be hurried away by a gale of popular frenzy. He was reviled, he was ridiculed, he was slowly losing his influence both with the people and with the Government, but he would not allow his better judgment to be overborne. Facts do not cease to be facts, simply because you do not like them "Let us not forget," said Gokhale, "that we are at a stage of the country's progress when our achievements are bound to be small, our disappointments frequent and trying. It will be given to our countrymen of future generations to serve India by their successes; we, of the present generation, must be content to serve India mainly by our failures. For hard though it be, out of these failures the strength will come which in the end will accomplish great tasks."<sup>40</sup>

If constitutional agitation failed, what was the alternative? The so-called boycotts did not appeal to the imagination of Gokhale; they were bound to fail. Referring first to the economic boycott, he said that the exclusion from their market of foreign goods worth a hundred crores a year was bound to be a slow affair, and even if it were successful, it would not affect our political domination, which in certain conceivable circumstances, might even become harsher. The political boycott was simply impossible. It was no use destroying schools and colleges before you build up new ones, for these were very useful even for the development of national spirit. The boycott of Government services was ludicrous in the extreme. The boycott of the legislatures was also bound to be equally futile; for there were enough men in the country who would take the vacant places. We should aim at the steady increase in the little powers of administration we possessed, instead of throwing away even these little opportunities of serving the public.

Concluding his criticism of the extremist methods, he said,

the most direct and the most effective form of passive resistance was non-payment of taxes; it would further bring home to each man the responsibility of his own action. Let the Extremists resort to it and they would soon find out where they stood and how far they were supported.<sup>41</sup>

But constitutional agitation had not failed; it could not fail. It had not been even tried. They had not yet exhausted even a thousandth part of the possibilities of real constitutional agitation. English history was one long record of a policy of peaceful and persistent political pressure yielding step by step the desired results. In Great Britain, reforms had not been granted to people out of a mood of generosity on the part of the rulers: they had been wrung, extracted from reluctant hands, by ceaseless bombardment of criticism in all the ways known to modern democracies. But these ways were constitutional, and they were peaceful. Dadabhai, even in 1905, repeated the same cry—the need for more and more agitation — “What is wanted for us is to learn the lesson from the English themselves—to agitate most largely and most perseveringly by petitions, demonstrations, and meetings, all quite peacefully but enthusiastically conducted... Agitation is the life and soul of the whole political, social, and industrial history of England. It is by agitation the English have accomplished their most glorious achievements, their prosperity, their liberties, and, in short, their first place among the nations of the world. The whole life of England, every day, is all agitation. You do not open your paper in the morning but read from beginning to end, it is all agitation—Congresses and Conferences—Meetings and Resolutions—without end for a thousand and one movements, local and national. From the Prime Minister to the humblest politician, his occupation is agitation for everything he wants to accomplish. Agitation is the civilised peaceful weapon of moral force, and infinitely preferable to brute physical force when possible.”<sup>42</sup>

The Liberals based their hopes for the eventual success of constitutional agitation on a number of assumptions. In the first place, they had faith in the righteousness of their cause and



the operations of a sympathetic Providence. In a speech delivered in England, Surendranath Bannerjee (1909) said, "The journey may seem long and wearisome; the promised land may appear to be distant, but uplifted by hope and by faith—an undying faith in the high destinies of our country—let us fight the good fight, and I am confident that the God of all nations will vouchsafe us the victory—that victory which awaits those who, inspired by sublime confidence in His dispensation and in the paramountcy of the moral laws, seek to work out the regeneration of the country in a spirit of peace, of righteousness, and absolute self-consecration." <sup>43</sup>

This undying faith in the destinies of the country had inspired all parties as well as the faith in the inherent righteousness of the cause. But lest we might be tempted to misjudge or not properly judge these early protagonists of India's cause, we should fully emphasise and bring out the sources of inspiration which sustained them for years against heavy odds and lent a certain sublimity to their efforts. The Liberals were fully conscious that political concessions were not to be had for the asking or that there would be cheap attainment of freedom without long and arduous trials. In 1902, we find Surendranath Bannerjee concluding his Presidential Address with a characteristic appeal to India's great past. "The triumphs of liberty are not to be won in a day. Liberty is a jealous Goddess, exacting in her worship and claiming from her votaries prolonged and assiduous devotion. Read history. Learn from it the inestimable lesson of patience and fortitude and self-sacrificing devotion which a constitutional struggle for constitutional liberty involves. The responsibilities of the present, the hopes of the future, the glories of the past ought all to inspire us with the noblest enthusiasm to serve our country. Is there a land more worthy of service and sacrifice? Where is a land more interesting, more venerated in antiquity, more rich in historic traditions, in the wealth of religious, ethical, and spiritual conceptions, which have left an enduring impress on the civilization of mankind? India is the cradle of two religions. It is the Holy Land of the East. Here knowledge first lit her torch. Here, in

the morning of the world, the Vedic Rishis sang those hymns which represent the first yearnings of infant humanity towards the divine ideal. Here was developed a literature and language which still excite the admiration of mankind—a philosophy which pondered deep over the problems of life and evolved solutions which satisfied the highest yearnings of the loftiest minds. Here man first essayed to solve the mystery of life, and the solution wrapped in the rich colours of the poetic imagination and clothed with the deeper significance of a higher spiritual idea, bids fair, thanks to the genius of the greatest Hindu scientist of the age, to be accepted by the world of science. From our shores went forth those missionaries who, filled with apostolic fervour, traversed the wilds of Asia and established the ascendancy of that faith which is the law and religion of the Nations of the Far East. Japan is our spiritual pupil. China, Siberia, and the island of the Eastern Archipelago turn with reverend eyes to the land, where was born the prophet of their faith.”<sup>44</sup> Ranade professes the same faith in the divine mission of India. “I profess implicit faith in two articles of my creed : this country of ours is the true land of promise, this race of ours is the chosen race. It was not for nothing that God has showered his choicest blessings on this ancient land of Aryavarta”<sup>45</sup>

But what differentiated the Liberals from other political parties is their faith in the British Government and the British people. The other more radical parties believed even more fervently, as we shall see, in God and the country. The Liberals, however, pinned their faith in the British people to an extent not shared by others. Constitutional agitation meant agitation in two directions; an agitation to rouse the Indian people and an agitation to rouse the British people and the British Government. Their ideal was to obtain a recognition of equality in the Empire, and consequently their whole agitation was directed to convince the British that they were fit for more responsibility, that they had as much right to the control of their domestic affairs as the other peoples in the Empire had in their own countries. The ideals

which had inspired the British all through their history were democratic ideals; how could they then be now false to those ideals? Secondly, they argued that the colonies had gradually risen to the status of self-government in a constitutional way. India, too, if she perseveres, could attain the same constitutional liberty in a constitutional way. Thirdly, almost every internal domestic struggle in English history had been fought and won in the same constitutional way. Fourthly, there were the declarations of Liberal statesmen, which had the ring of unmistakable sincerity about them. Fifthly, they found in actual experience a certain fairness and broad-mindedness about the British people which always sustained them in their hopes.

Surendranath Bannerjee, addressing a meeting at Finsbury, asserted his invincible faith in the English people. "We have great confidence in the justice and generosity of the English people. We have abounding faith in the liberty-loving instincts of the greatest representative assembly in the world—the British House of Commons, the Mother of Parliaments, where sits enthroned the newly enfranchised democracy of those islands. To whatever party you belong...you own an indefeasible allegiance to that which forms the keystone of your constitution, the representative principle, the right of the people to have a voice in the government of their country. Your history is the history of the growth, the progress, and the triumph of the representative principle, your literature is pervaded by the same lofty spirit of freedom. Wherever the English have gathered together, wherever they have formed their colonies, whether it be amid the blazing heat of the equatorial regions or in those distant continents, watered by the Southern Seas,—wherever the English have raised their flag and have formed their governments, they have formed them upon the representative model and the representative basis."<sup>4</sup> 6

The Liberals were never tired of quoting the great utterances of British statesmen; and just as every word in the Bible is sacred to the orthodox Christian, and every text a matter of

literal truth, so every sermon of the British statesman became the one source of inspiration and light and stability to the Indian Liberal, when all around was confusion and darkness. Thus for example, Dadabhai Naoroji quoted Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman ( who was quoting Bright ) and took his stand on the British conscience .

“ There is on earth a yet diviner thing  
Veiled though it be than Parliament or King. ”

“ What is that diviner thing ? It is the human conscience, inspiring human opinion and human sympathy. ” “ I ask them, ” said Dadabhai “ to extend that human conscience to India. ” In the words of Mr. Morley, “ It will be a bad day indeed if we have one conscience for the mother country and another conscience for all that vast territory over which your eye does not extend.”<sup>47</sup> No wonder that Dadabhai thought that as we have the right to petition ( the British Bill of Rights—fifth clause ). India could do well in sending a petition to His Majesty the King-Emperor, the House of Commons, and the House of Lords.

The Indian Liberals always had high hopes when the Liberals in England came to power; and when John Morley became the Secretary of State for India, they felt that the Indian problem would receive a very sympathetic handling. Thus Gokhale could not suppress his jubilation. “ Large numbers of educated men in this country feel towards Morley as towards a Master, and the heart hopes and trembles as it never hoped and trembled before. He, the reverend student of Burke, the friend and biographer of Gladstone, will he courageously apply their principles and his own to the government of this country or will he, too, succumb to the influence of the India Office, and thus cast a blight on hopes which his own writings have done so much to foster.”<sup>48</sup>

It is difficult for men of this generation to enter into the “ mentality of the Indian Liberals in those days. But the spell of English history, of English ideals, of English literature so power-

fully held their mind that they hoped that in spite of temporary and apparent setbacks, the march of India towards complete freedom under the ægis of Great Britain was a dead certainty. When they talked of the divine possibilities inherent in the new dispensation, they lost themselves almost in a trance. Their language suddenly became poetical; and they talked like mystics, who had the secret of divine political illumination. Here is a passage from Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, which speaks to us of the same unconquerable faith in the mysterious linking of India to Great Britain, the same determination to see hope and nothing but hope in the Indian political horizon "I cannot believe that England will ever retrace her steps or forget her duty to India, where she came not as a conqueror but as a deliverer with the ready acquiescence of the people, 'to heal and settle,' to substitute order and good government for disorder and anarchy, to fit 'stone to stone again,' and restore that edifice which had been slowly and painfully built up by the wisest and best of Indian sovereigns. That task has now been accomplished; white-winged peace now broods over the whole land; and it only remains for England now to fit us gradually for that autonomy which she has granted to her colonies...Then and not till then will the bar sinister be removed,—that badge of inferiority and subjection which must chafe and gall men who have been nourished on the glorious literature of England,—that literature which had taught France the principles of liberty and which must carry with it wherever it spreads a love of British virtues and of British freedom.

"Great is the destiny of England, but equally great are the responsibilities involving a sacred trust; but I am confident that the august mother of free nations, the friend of struggling nationalities and of emancipation all over the world, will rise to the height of her duty. Shall Christian England fall below pagan Rome, who in her best days, conquered only to extend the privileges of citizenship to her subjects, investing them with equal rights and equal laws, equally administered?" "Pherozechah Mehta declared in 1890 from the Congress Chair his "unbounded

faith in the living and fertilising principles of English culture and English education."<sup>50</sup>

If English history and English literature and English sense of justice were vague, intangible factors, the Liberal politicians took care to fortify themselves with something more solid and reliable. They took their stand upon the solemn pledges given to India from time to time. The Proclamation of 1858 was to them as dear as the Sermon on the Mount is to an orthodox Christian. Every word in the Proclamation went to their heart. Here was a basis upon which they could build the structure of India's future State, and build enduringly. The Proclamation and similar other great utterances were recited as *mantras*—carrying with them a sort of mystic virtue. The British Government owed its stability to this one great document given to India on a great occasion by Queen Victoria, more than to any other factor during all these years after the Mutiny. "The Proclamation," said Surendranath, "is the Magna Charta of our rights and liberties. The Proclamation, the whole Proclamation and nothing but the Proclamation—is our watchword, our battle cry. It is the ensign of battle, and the ensign of victory. It is the gospel of our political redemption."<sup>51</sup> The Proclamation gave them practically all that they wanted—full and equal British citizenship. The essence of the Liberal's constitutional agitation was to bring home to the consciousness of the British statesmen the implications of their great pledges and charters and to insist in season and out of season their one demand to be governed according to the principles laid down by themselves.

Still even if those great declarations sounded too abstract and visionary to the matter-of-fact politician, the Liberal took his stand always upon the one thing which matters to a politician—viz. self-interest. Their great thesis was that the interests of India were the interests of Great Britain. The Benthamite principle of enlightened self-interest certainly stands as the one reliable force in human affairs. The Liberals always tried to prove that in the long run what was good for India was good for Britain.

Their one anxiety was not to weaken the Empire but to strengthen it. They did not want separation; they wanted assimilation. They did not want to cut off their country from the great British power, they wanted to bring it nearer to it. They, therefore, turned their faces against all radical politics; because that was destructive of all that the Empire stood for, all that India badly needed. Even if the Empire assured them of nothing but order and peace, they would hug it to their bosom, because they knew that these were conditions without which freedom and growth were impossible. Constitutional agitation meant to them above all, progress compatible with and based on order. "You must all realise," said Gokhale to the Extremists, "that whatever the shortcomings of bureaucracy, and however intolerable at times the insolence of the individual Englishman, they alone stand to-day in the country for order; and without continued order, no real progress is possible for our people. It is not difficult at any time to create disorder in our country—it was our portion for centuries—but it is not so easy to substitute another form of order for that which has been evolved in the course of century." 52

Hence their indomitable faith in constitutional agitation as the one weapon for good, given to India. Their loyalty to the Empire ideal was not the lip loyalty which cautious statesmen wear on their sleeves to make their progress easy. Their loyalty was not a mere matter of give-and-take, of calculation, of utility. Their loyalty was their faith, their one political religion. The Empire was dear to their imagination, the Empire was the one sure basis of India's present achievements and future hopes. Great Britain had held forth the promise of that charmed thing called freedom before their ideals; and if she were not there to supervise this very difficult process of the attainment of freedom, what would happen to India? "England has moved us," said Pundit Bishan Narayan Dhar, "from our ancient anchorage. She has cast us adrift, against our will, upon the wide waters of a seething proletariat, and we turn back to England, and ask her to grant us that compass of representative institutions by which amid a

thousand storms, she has steered her prosperous course to the safe haven of regulated political freedom."<sup>53</sup> "If you go on making your appeal," he said in 1888, "with fairness, courage, and moderation to the great English nation, they will assuredly respond to your prayers, for as the harp responds to the harper's touch, so does the great deep heart of England respond to every reasonable prayer for justice and freedom."<sup>54</sup> It was, however, reserved for Surendranath always to wind up his orations by invoking that sublime faith in the Empire. He was always sure of "one response which...will be in accord with the great traditions of the English people, and will serve to consolidate the foundations of British rule in India, and to broad-base it upon the affections of a happy, prosperous, and contented people." "We plead for the permanence of British rule in India. We plead for the gradual reconstruction of that ancient and venerated system which has given to India law and order and the elements of stable peace. We plead for justice and liberty, for equal rights and enlarged privileges for our participation in the citizenship of the Empire; and I am sure we do not plead in vain; for the Empire, thus reconstructed and reorganised will be stronger, nobler, richer far in the love, the gratitude, the enthusiastic devotion of a happy and contented people, rejoicing in their indissoluble union with England, and glorying in the rich promise of a steady and uninterrupted progress towards their destinies, under the protection and guidance of that great people to whom in the counsels of Providence has been assigned the high mission and the consecrated task of disseminating among the nations of the earth the great, the priceless, the inestimable blessing of constitutional liberty."<sup>55</sup>

It is necessary to understand the precise objects of this agitation and the conditions under which it had to be carried on, before we are entitled to pass a summary verdict of condemnation upon it. The politicians in India wanted in the first place to bring about a better mutual understanding between the people and the Government. They intended to play the rôle of interpreters of the popular mind on the one hand and of the mind of



## 194 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

the Government on the other. The Congress agitation did this part of the task quite well. All those views which hitherto were discussed in private or in individual newspapers were now expressed in an authoritative form by the leading representatives of the country.

Secondly, the Liberals aimed at the general establishment of the principles of democracy in the administration of the country. Here the task was not so easy. They never imagined that it would be *veni, vidi, vici* (I came, I saw, I conquered), for them. The Liberals had their heads in the clouds; but their feet were firmly planted on the solid ground of reality. Their task was two-fold, to bring about the gradual conversion of the authorities on the one hand and of the people on the other hand. They knew that the Government meant business; and rhetorical appeals to the higher part of human nature did not bring about miraculous changes in human affairs. They did not cherish illusions as to the strength and resolution on the part of the bureaucracy. "On one side of us," said Gokhale, "are arrayed forces of racial ascendancy, of monopoly, of power...We had no reason to expect the citadel of monopoly to capitulate at the first assault, and we have only ourselves to thank if we are now disappointed in such unjustifiable expectations. Remember, gentlemen, that those who are against us and in whose hands there is the monopoly of power—they have behind them practically the vast resources of Government. In any case they have behind them the moral support of the Government of the country. Moreover, it is but fair to acknowledge that they are a body of picked men, that man for man they are better than ourselves, they have a higher standard of duty, higher notions of patriotism, higher notions of loyalty to each other, higher notions of organised work and of discipline...We have no right to complain that they are what they are. If we understand the true dignity of political work, we should rejoice that we are confronted by opponents such as these."<sup>56</sup>

! The Congress during its career of twenty years (1885-1905), had not been altogether futile. The age for the Indian Civil

Service was raised from 19 to 23. The Legislative Councils had been expanded, and there had been all along an improvement. There was no reason to despair. It had been argued that subject peoples nowhere have achieved their salvation by such methods. Gokhale's reply is characteristic. "You can never have a perfect parallel in history...The history of the world has not yet come to an end. There are more chapters to be added"<sup>57</sup> T

↓ It was not that constitutional agitation had failed, but that Indians had failed. The possibilities of constitutional agitation had hardly been fathomed. Patience was nowhere more necessary than here, because unless you acquire the power to change facts, you should put up with them. These elder statesmen knew too well that Rome was not built in a day. It was the consciousness of the greatness of their task that made them preach the gospel of patience. Nothing great was easy, and the virtue of knowing the limits of human effort was always remembered by them. Dr. Rash Behari Ghose tried in the characteristic Liberal way to remind his audience of the necessary slowness of all great change in human life. "But you must have patience. You must learn to wait, and everything will come to you in time. Remember the long and arduous struggle in England before the Catholics were emancipated or the Test Acts repealed. Remember the great fight which Cobden had to fight for the repeal of the Corn Laws. Remember the public agitation and the ferment before the first Reform Act was passed. Remember too, how very slowly the Irish Church fell; and when you hear the English described as a nation of shop keepers, do not forget that they spent twenty millions to emancipate the slave. Our difficulties are very much greater, for we have not only to face class prejudices, but also the prejudices so hard to die, of race, of religion, and of colour, for we are unhappily in every sense aliens. But do not be discouraged; do not despair. There is not the least cause for despondency. Have confidence in yourselves and also in the good faith of England, and do not, I pray you, be led away by the passions of the moment; and when you are met by calumnies and lies, console yourselves with the reflection that the just claims of the great body

of the English people have been similarly met by the party of privilege and supremacy and a subservient Press."<sup>58</sup>

↓ Turning next to the more important task of organising public opinion, the Liberals found that they had to fight a vast mass of ignorance, apathy, and moral helplessness. ↑ It was an exceedingly difficult work "to energise this vast mass, to put life into it, to make it move along with us, and the work is bound to be slow."<sup>59</sup> Here they confessed that this record was very meagre, progress was very slow. "Our public life is really feeble and ineffective, because it is so faint-hearted and so soulless. Very few of us have faith in the work we are doing. There must be more discipline in our public life."<sup>60</sup> In the same mood of confession, Surendranath burst out, "Here we are, hesitating, doubting, calculating, casting up moral results to satisfy ourselves that gains have been commensurable to our sacrifices. Such indeed has not been the royal road to political enfranchisement."<sup>61</sup>

The results so far achieved in the creation of public spirit had been rather disappointing. It was true that, thanks to the ceaseless activity of the Congress, the Legislatures became more and more living bodies, that there had been a greater grasp of public affairs on the part of the educated classes and a keener interest in public problems on the part of the public; and that the Press had become a more potent instrument for public good than was the case before. It was also true that the real gains in a struggle such as this were bound to be moral rather than material. "The real moral interest of a struggle, such as we are engaged in, lies not so much in the particular readjustment of present institutions which we may succeed in securing, as in the strength that the conflict brings us to be a permanent part of ourselves. The whole life of the people which is broader and deeper than what is touched by purely political institutions, is enriched even by failures, provided that the effort has been all that it should be."<sup>61</sup>

Here we come face to face with the right intuition of the greatest Liberals as regards the end of all constitutional agitation,

the real problem of the country. Political demands and economic needs may rouse us and sustain us in our efforts; but deeper than politics and economics, and sustaining and inspiring both politics and economics, is the character of man. In India man had lost his original stature, and unless he recovered it, all other gains were but as sounding of the brass or the tinkling of the cymbal. If politics were feeble, it was because man was feeble. Quoting his master, Ranade, Gokhale continues, "The true end of our work is to renovate, to purify, and also to perfect the whole man, liberating his intellect, elevating his standard of duty, and developing to the full all his powers. Till so renovated, purified, and perfected, we can never hope to be what our ancestors once were,—a chosen people to whom great tasks were allotted and by whom great deeds were performed. Where this feeling animates the workers, it is a matter of comparative indifference in what particular directions it asserts itself and in what particular method it proceeds to work. With a liberated manhood, with a buoyant hope, with a faith that never shirks duty, with a sense of justice that deals fairly by all, with unclouded intellect and powers fully cultivated, and lastly with a love that overleaps all bounds, renovated India will take her proper rank among the nations of the world, and be the master of the situation and of her own destiny. This is the goal to be reached—this is the promised land. Happy are they who see it in distant vision, happier those who are permitted to work and clear the way for it, happiest they who live to see it with their eyes and tread upon the holy soil once more. Famine and pestilence, oppression and sorrow, will then be myths of the past; and the gods will once again descend to the earth and associate with men, as they did in times which we now call mythical."<sup>62</sup>

Constitutional agitation ought to be a much more comprehensive programme than had been so far attempted. If everyone contributed his mite, the rich their money, the scholars and thinkers their learning and thought, the young men their missionary zeal and devotion, the face of the country would be transformed. "If we all recognise our respective duties in this spirit," said the

sage of Poona, " we shall be able to turn our present efforts into a great, rousing movement for the political emancipation of this land. In the presence of such a movement, all our petty personal differences will sink, all our squabbles will vanish, our faith will shine radiantly, sacrifices will be made to the extent they are necessary and the country will march onwards to the realisation of that destiny of which we should dream by night and on which we should muse by day."<sup>63</sup> Here we get a prophetic glimpse of the future on the part of this great Indian Liberal leader. It was becoming clearer and clearer to the mind of the Liberal,—and all this development was taking place under the influence largely of the radical thought in the country—that a nation-wide movement was more and more required in the interests of the cause which was so dear to his heart. But it should never be forgotten that the expansion of the Liberal mind which was witnessed since 1900 was largely due to the influence of the Tilak School of Politics.

#### 10. ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM.

The Congress began as a very modest and very moderate body. It assumed the rôle of a fearless critic of individual administrative measures from the very beginning. It played the part in one sense of "*His Majesty's Opposition*;" but it had no hopes of turning out the party in power and taking its place. In spite of this drawback, the Congress on the whole never indulged in irresponsible criticism.

In the first place, the Congress tried to safeguard the legal rights of the people and to ensure an impartial administration of justice. It protested against the curtailment of the powers of juries and the combination of the judicial and executive functions in one body. The "strange union of the functions of constable and magistrate, public prosecutor and criminal judge, revenue collector and appeal court in revenue cases" was a subject of ceaseless comment in early Congress years. Here was a vicious combination of two incompatible rôles in the same person, leading to flagrant miscarriages of justice. But the Government on the

grounds of economy and executive prestige continued the system. The Congress criticism has become accepted as valid to a great extent. Mr. Adamson, the Home Member, admitted in a budget debate, in 1908, that "the exercise of control over the subordinate magistrates by whom the great bulk of criminal cases are tried, is the point where the present system is defective. If the control is exercised by the officer who is responsible for the peace of the district, there is the constant danger that the subordinate magistracy may be unconsciously guided by other than purely judicial considerations...It is not enough that the administration of justice is pure; it can never be the bedrock of our rule unless it is also above suspicion."<sup>64</sup>

Secondly, the Liberal politicians were equally keen on diffusing elements of general education all over the country. In 1910, Gokhale brought a resolution for making primary education compulsory and free in British India before the Imperial Council. "I think that the question of free and compulsory primary education is now in this country the question of questions. The well being of millions upon millions of children who are waiting to be brought under the humanising influence of education depends upon it. The increased efficiency of the individual, the higher general level of intelligence, the stiffening of the moral backbone of large sections of the community none of these things can come without such education. In fact, the whole of our future as a nation is inextricably bound up with it...The practice of the whole civilized world, the sympathies of British democracy, and our own natural and legitimate aspirations all these are united in its favour. To my mind the call to them (the Government) is clear and it is also the call of statesmanship that statesmanship which pursues, unflinching but unflinching, the highest interests of the people committed to its care."<sup>65</sup>

Gokhale emphasised the necessity of mass education as an absolute essential to the process of national reconstruction. He reminded the Government that the education of the children was one of its primary duties. The Government had to spend on the

## 200 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

police and the army; but here the ideal was to keep down expenditure to the lowest level consistent with the proper standard of efficiency. They were necessary; but they were necessary evils. It was not so with education. Here, the more one spent the better. European Governments were arming themselves heavily; but this heavy military expenditure did not come in the way of national education.

What did education mean for the people? It meant for them the capacity to read and write. It meant a higher level of intelligence, a keener enjoyment of life, a more refined standard of living and greater economic and moral efficiency. Grant the man in the street, grant the man in the village ordinary elementary education, and the superstitions and prejudices of the masses would disappear, and a higher level of thought, of comfort, and of health would ensue. If they wanted to fight plague and malaria, the tyranny of the moneylender, the abuses of petty officials, they would have to teach the people to read and write. If it was the duty of the Government to establish and maintain order and suppress crime, it was equally its duty to root out ignorance, which was the parent of all crime and misery. A popular system of education was the one necessary essential for the eventual establishment of a popular system of Government.

In all advanced countries they saw compulsory elementary education working wonders. In 1870, England had forty-three per cent of her children at school and in ten years all the children came under the influence of education. Japan took compulsion and saw within twenty years the universal spread of education. It was no use arguing against compulsion. As Pundit Malaviya said, "to establish and to maintain order and to repress crime, a certain amount of compulsion, of restraint, had to be exercised on the wills and actions of individuals. Any further comment on this 'logic of compulsion' is superfluous, for without it, the very idea of society falls to the ground." The Hon. Mr. Basu said that Lord William Bentinck had prevented the burning of hundreds of *sutees* annually, so compulsory education was likely to save millions

of people from the ravages of plague, cholera, and malaria.

Another problem which came year after year to the Congress was the *problem of the public services*. In a way, the whole political agitation had started in the country on this issue. In 1833, the right of Indians to all posts was recognised by statute. In 1853, the competitive principle was introduced. During the régime of Lord Salisbury, the age-limit for the competitive examination for the Civil Service was reduced to nineteen. In 1877, one of the biggest public demonstrations was held in Calcutta on this question and Surendranath Bannerjee undertook a tour over the country to rouse public feeling on a question of common interest. Lal Mohan Ghose was sent to England to agitate on this question. Dadabhai Naoroji carried on the same fight in England for a number of years.

The Congress took up the question at its very first session. Its demand was the fulfilment of the pledges given in 1833 and 1858. In the fifth Congress, Gokhale charged the Government with hypocrisy or treachery. "The terms of the enactment of 1833 and the Proclamation of 1858 are so explicit that those who now try to withhold the privileges then assured to us must be prepared to face the painful dilemma of hypocrisy or treachery, must be prepared to admit that England was insincere when she made these promises or that she is prepared to break faith with us now."<sup>66</sup> The age limit had been raised from 19 to 23. The Congress demanded practically that the competitive system should be worked under conditions which should guarantee to Indians complete equality of treatment. The Civil Service Examinations were held in England; the age limit for some years was kept at 19. These conditions virtually shut out Indians from *their share in the higher service*. The agitation for *simultaneous examinations* both in India and England continued without success up to 1920, when the principle was accepted by the Government.

The Liberals, in fact, concentrated upon this problem of a wider and wider employment of Indians in the higher services of



the country. England's success in India, said Gokhale, depended largely upon its successful association of Indians with the tasks of administration. There must be a steady movement in this direction. If the growing unrest were to be prevented, it was absolutely essential that the Government should adopt a policy of progressive substitution of Indian for foreign agency. "The question, however, that in my humble opinion transcends all others in importance at this moment is how to associate the people of this country with the administration of their own affairs, so that their growing estrangement may be prevented, and while their self-respect is satisfied on one side, the bond between them and the Empire may be strengthened on the other. The Englishman who imagines that India can be governed much longer on the same lines as in the past, and the Indian who thinks that he must seek a destiny for his country outside the Empire, of which now, for better or worse, we are a part, both alike show an inadequate appreciation of the realities of the present situation"<sup>67</sup>

The case for the Indianization of higher services rested partly on economic, partly on political, but above all on moral grounds. Here we shall not discuss the wider constitutional question. The political ground is stated above; there was growing dissatisfaction in the country, especially among the educated classes at their being shut out from most of the lucrative and responsible posts. Secondly, there was the financial argument. The foreign agency was bound to be a very expensive agency. The European demanded a very high salary and this meant a burden on the finances of the country which was out of all proportion to the country's economic capacity or the commercial return in the shape of efficient service. There were heavy pensions and furlough charges. Dadabhai went further and said that "the employment of a native is not only economy, but a complete gain to the extent of his whole salary. When a European is employed, he displaces a native whom nature intended to fill the place. The native coming in his place is natural. Every pie he eats is, therefore, a gain to the country, and every pie he saves

is so much saved to the country for the use of all its children. Every pie paid to a foreigner is a complete moral loss to the country."<sup>68</sup>

The moral degradation involved in the permanent operation of the system was the most crushing argument against its continuance. In a striking passage, Gokhale clearly pointed out the enormous degradation, intellectual and moral, involved in a system in which Indians were mere clerks, mere servants meant to carry out the orders of their British masters. "A kind of dwarfing or stunting of our race is going on under the present system. We must live all the days of our life in an atmosphere of inferiority and the tallest of us must bend, in order that the exigencies of the existing system may be satisfied. The upward impulse which every schoolboy at Eton or Harrow may feel, that he may one day be a Gladstone, a Nelson, or a Wellington, and which may draw forth all the best efforts of which he is capable, is denied to us. The full height to which our manhood is capable of rising can never be reached by us under the present system. The moral elevation which every self-governing people feels cannot be felt by us. Our administrative and military talents must gradually disappear, owing to sheer disuse, till at last our lot, as hewers of wood and drawers of water, in our own country, is stereotyped."<sup>69</sup>

The Congress politicians were bitterly excited about the disarmament policy of the British Government. They felt that their loyalty was met by a policy of persistent distrust and suspicion. They felt that the country was slowly losing its power of self-defence under the insidious operation of the Arms Act. They further felt that there was an invidious distinction in the application of the principle of the Arms Act between different races. Some of the bitterest speeches in the Congress were on this disarmament question. It was one of the roots of the political unrest. It revealed to the trusting mind of the Indian liberal politician the grim reality of "foreign rule."

In the first Congress, an appeal

made to the Govern-

ment " to change their present policy of suspicion and distrust to a generous and confiding one." <sup>70</sup> In the second Congress, Raja Rampal Singh pointed out the dangers inherent in the Government policy and the limitations of the attitude of gratitude and loyalty which the Congress had taken up, in a spirited speech. " We cannot be grateful to it ( the Government ) for degrading our natures, for systematically crushing out of us all martial spirit, for converting a race of soldiers and heroes into a timid flock of quill-driving sheep... When I think that, despite the glories of the Pax Britannica, despite the noble intentions of Great Britain, despite all the good she may have done or tried to do us, the balance will be against her and India will have to regret rather than rejoice that she has ever had anything to do with England

" This may be strong language, but it is the truth: nothing can ever make amends to a nation, for the destruction of its national spirit, and of the capacity to defend itself, and the soil from which it springs.

" Nor is it only we who shall have to regret and suffer for the mistaken policy that our Government is unhappily pursuing in this matter. Look where you will around you in the world, and you will see gigantic armies and armaments. There is trouble in store for the whole civilised world, and sooner or later a tremendous military struggle will commence, in which assuredly before it terminates, Great Britain will be involved...

" Then will England regret that instead of millions of brave Indians trained to arms to fling back invaders, she has only her scanty legions to oppose to them and from her timid subjects can only look at most for good wishes—good wishes truly good in their way, but poor bulwarks against Berdan rifles and steel ordinances.

" But on our own account we deprecate the existing policy. High and low, we are losing all knowledge of the use of arms, and with this, that spirit of self-reliance which enables a man to dare,

which makes men brave, which makes them worthy of the name of men...Fifty years ago, without desiring warfare, every young man's heart glowed within him at the thought of some day showing his prowess in a fair fight. If men are to be fit for soldiers, fit to fight to any purpose, when the time of trial comes, and come it must for every country, then they must be trained in the use of arms, they must from their childhood see their parents, their elders, using arms and participating in the use of those martial exercises which only thirty-five years ago, in Oudh at least, were part of every gentleman's occupation.

"I might dwell on the fact that in the way the Arms Act is now worked in many localities, the people, their herds, their crops are wholly at the mercy of wild beasts. I might dwell on the insult, the injustice, the violation of the most sacred and solemn pledges by England to India that are involved in the rules that permit Indian Christians, but do not permit Indian Hindus or Mahomedans to volunteer."<sup>71</sup>

Another speaker made a striking comparison between the earlier Government and the British Raj in this respect. "The Emperors of old had confidence in the bravery and faithfulness of the people, and never deprived them of arms, and derived considerable assistance from the people in return. The martial spirit of the people of the country raised the descendants of Taimur, Akbar in particular, to the highest pitch of supremacy and power. If the people of India with arms in their hands and bullets in their pockets could remain subject to the Mahomedan Empire, and accepted its supremacy, does it stand to reason that they would rebel against so just and civilised a Government as that of the British people? The peace and prosperity of a people are among the first requisites of sovereignty and these cannot be secured unless the rulers and the ruled repose mutual confidence in each other.

"No Emperor ever feared the sword of his subject, nor ever emasculated a brave nation by force...You must have read

in history that when Nadir Shah once summoned the Nawab of Farrukabad to Delhi for an interview, and the Nawab replied that he could not come without his armour and weapons, Nadir said:—' Go and tell him he may come with his artillery.' What a revolution ! There was a time when the Emperors of old were not afraid of the arms of their enemies, a time has now come when we, unfortunate though loyal and faithful subjects are distrusted even by our own Government."<sup>7 2</sup>

Sir S. P. Sinha in 1915 as a Congress President thoroughly exposed the so-called natural defencelessness and military incapacity of the Indian people. The British, in season and out of season, pointed out that their obligations to the people of the country demanded that they should not relax their hold as long as India remained militarily helpless. But who was responsible for this military and naval helplessness ? The assumption here was that the people were inherently unfit for self-defence: and the arm of the British was necessary to protect them against foreign invasion. " I take leave to point out, therefore, that it is not correct at any rate at the present time, to assert of any sections of the Indian people that they are wanting in such physical courage and manly virtues as to render them incapable of bearing arms. But even if it were so, is it not the obvious duty of England so to train them as to remove this incapacity as they are trying to remove so many others, especially if it be the case, as there is some reason to believe it is, that it is the English rule which has brought them to such a pass ? England has ruled this country for considerably over 150 years now, and surely it cannot be a matter of pride to her that at the end of this period the withdrawal of her rule means chaos and anarchy and would leave the country an easy prey to any foreign adventurers. There are some of our critics who never fail to remind us that if the English were to leave the country to-day, we would have to wire to them to come back before they got as far as Aden. Some even enjoy the grim joke that were the English to withdraw now, there would be neither a rupee nor a virgin left in some parts of the country. For my part I can

conceive of no more scathing indictment of the results of British Rule. A superman might gloat over the spectacle of the conquest of might over justice, and over righteousness, but I am much mistaken if the British nation fighting now as ever for the cause of justice and freedom and liberty, will consider it as other than discreditable to itself in the highest degree that, after nearly two centuries of British Rule, India has been brought to-day to the same emasculated condition as the Britons were in the beginning of the fifth century when the Roman legions left the English shores, in order to defend their own country against the Huns, Goths and other barbarian hordes

“ In asking, therefore, for the right of military training, we are seeking to regain our lost self-respect and to strengthen our sense of civic responsibility. We are seeking to regain our right to defend our homes and hearths against possible invaders, should the strong protecting arm of England be ever withdrawn from our country. It is no mere sentiment that compels us to demand this inalienable right of all human beings, though sentiment has its undoubted place in the scheme of every government.”<sup>13</sup>

## II. ECONOMIC REFORM.

The Indian Liberals very soon perceived the close connection between economics and politics. It is true that they started as politicians and then developed their special economic policy. They were the first to attempt a comprehensive diagnosis of India's economic ills and suggest remedies. They have given us detailed historical analyses of the slow deterioration that came over Indian economic life especially during the early years of the British Raj. They collected statistics or used the existing statistics to show that India had become one of the poorest countries in the world. They traced almost all economic miseries to India's growing ruralisation and the constant drain to which she was subjected. They pleaded passionately for the examination of India's

economic life in the light of India's peculiar conditions and became the founders of what is subsequently known as Indian economics. They pleaded powerfully for a sort of national policy of discriminating protection to industries suited to India. They subjected the financial and currency and land revenue policy of the Government to a fire of ceaseless criticism. They came to the conclusion that the political factor which elsewhere had made for economic prosperity had made for economic ruin in India. Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale, Telang, R. C. Dutt and M. G. Ranade, these may be said to be the first Indian economists who brought to bear their knowledge of modern economics upon India's problems in the light of India's conditions and needs.

#### **1. Relativity of Economic Doctrine: Indian Economics.**

The first great discovery which they made was the inapplicability of the dogmas of classical economics to India. In a brilliant paper, Ranade has given us the reasons why certain economic doctrines of Smith and Ricardo in their unqualified form were not applicable to India. Official exponents of the economics of India often took their stand on the doctrines of economic science. They imagined that these doctrines were absolutely and demonstrably true, and must be accepted for our guidance without any reference to time or place, or the stage of national advance. They considered any ethnic or social or juristic or ethical differences as irrelevant. For example, they argued that if free-trade were suited to England, it must be suited to all countries; if factory legislation were required in one country, it was equally necessary in other countries as well, that if State help were not necessary to credit institutions in England, it was equally superfluous in India; that if the public control and ownership of certain businesses were not in the interests of England, it was equally not in the interests of India, and so on.

Official economists might be excused to some extent if they applied consistently the same theories, right or wrong, to

both countries—England and India. But they were not consistent; they hailed from a country where private ownership of land was complete and they developed here a partiality for the socialization of land.<sup>74</sup>

Political Economy is not a science of general and absolute truths, like physics or chemistry. The classical economics assumed that (a) the individual is an economic man, actuated solely or mainly by self-interest; (b) the pursuit of self-interest on the part of every individual results in the maximum good of the society; (c) free competition is the ideal state of affairs; and all customary and state regulation is an encroachment on natural liberty; (d) there is perfect freedom and equality in the power of contract between individuals; (e) capital and labour are both perfectly mobile and move at once to a place where a better return is expected; (f) there is a universal tendency for profit and wages to seek a common level; (g) population tends to outstrip the means of subsistence; (h) demand and supply tend to adjust to each other; and (i) that National Economy is essentially individualistic and has no collective aspect.<sup>75</sup>

Ranade pointed out that these assumptions, break down particularly in Indian society. Here the average man is the very antipodes of the Economic man. The family and the caste are more powerful than the individual in determining his position in life. Self-interest, in the sense of the desire for wealth is not absent, but it is not the only ideal aimed at. There is neither the desire nor the aptitude for free and unlimited competition, except within certain predetermined grooves or groups. Custom and state regulation are far more powerful than competition, and status more decisive in its influence than contract. Neither capital nor labour is mobile, enterprising and intelligent enough to shift from place to place. Wages and profit are fixed, and not elastic and responsive to change of circumstances. Population follows its own law, being cut down by disease and famine, while production is almost stationary...In a society so constituted, the tendencies assumed as axiomatic, are not only inoperative, but are actually deflected



## 210 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

from their proper direction. You might as well talk of the tendency of mountains to be washed away into the sea, or of the valleys to fill up, or of the sun to get cold, as reasons for our practical conduct within a measurable distance of time.”<sup>76</sup>

Ranade rendered the same service to the cause of India that List did to Germany. He pointed out that national well-being consisted not only in the creation of the highest quantity of wealth measured in exchange value, independently of the quality of that wealth, but in the full and many sided development of all productive powers. The economic education of a nation was of greater value than the immediate gain of its present members. It was the duty of the State to help the people from a lower economic stage—agricultural—to a higher economic stage—industrial and commercial

It was necessary, therefore, to take into consideration the peculiar circumstances and the special economic stage of a people before any economic policy was laid down with regard to it. In India, labour was cheap and comparatively unskilled; capital was scarce and unenterprising; co operation on a large scale was unknown; agriculture was by far the chief industry of the people; custom was all-powerful; land was the monopoly of the State; there was a lower standard of life and a tendency to subdivision and not concentration of wealth; religious ideas were influential in checking too ardent a pursuit of wealth. These were old legacies and inherited weaknesses.<sup>77</sup>

### **2. Indian Poverty : Its Causes : Commercial Drain**

What is the present economic situation and how has it come about ? Partly, no doubt, it is due to the continuance of the medieval order of things. But, partly, it is the result of the new economic order which was suddenly forced upon our people.

The fundamental fact about India is her poverty. William Digby and Dadabhai Naoroji deserve the credit of bringing out

for the first time the fact of the grim poverty and consequent economic helplessness of the people. Here, as elsewhere, the Liberal politicians always took care to fortify their position by quotations from reliable English authorities, who were not likely to exaggerate facts damaging to British rule. Sir C. Elliot, for example, had said, "I do not hesitate to say that half of our agricultural population never know from year's end to year's end what it is to have their hunger fully satisfied."<sup>78</sup> Sir William Hunter's view is equally explicit. "There remain forty millions of people who go through life on insufficient food."<sup>79</sup>

There has been, in fact, an almost complete unanimity about the phenomenal nature of India's poverty. H. H. the Maharaja of Baroda has given us two statements of remarkable boldness and clarity about the economic problem of India—one in 1902, at the opening of the Industrial Exhibition at Ahmedabad and the other at the second Industrial Conference, in 1906. Famine, increasing poverty and widespread disease are there: they signify a radical weakness in our system. These cast a terrible shadow over all our present and future. "Fail there," said His Highness, "and what can the future bring us? We can only grow poorer and weaker, more dependent on foreign help, we must watch our industrial freedom fall into extinction, and drag out a miserable existence as the hewers of wood and drawers of water to any foreign power which happens to be our master. Solve that problem and you have a great future before, the future of a great people, worthy of your ancestors and of your old position among the nations"<sup>80</sup>

Here, therefore, is one of the root weaknesses of our whole system—a weakness which is bound to paralyse our efforts in every direction. It is necessary to realise the fact of its poverty and its significance in our social and national life; to trace it to its proper causes; and then to suggest its appropriate remedies. The Liberal School deserves the gratitude of the country for this excellent work in the analysis of Indian economic life and for the formulation of its remedies. Here the statements of His High-

ness are most characteristic.

Was poverty the result of some fundamental weakness of our nature due to our climate? There was a theory that the inhabitants of tropical and subtropical regions were disinherited by some mysterious law of nature from all hope of originality, enterprise, and leadership. Empire, civilisation, trade and manufacture, we had been told, belonged of right to the nations of the temperate regions. It was a part of the divine scheme that the Indians were to restrict themselves both in their interests as well as in the interests of the world to the production of raw materials.<sup>61</sup>

It was true that at present the situation in India was exceedingly depressing: and that leadership had passed out of our hands. But was this fact due to immutable causes beyond our control or was it the result of recent and removable tendencies?

The Indian genius was, we are told, great in religion and philosophy; but politics and economics were not its spheres. There was some truth in this statement; but there was considerable exaggeration and falsehood in it. These theories had a dangerous tendency to falsify facts and issues and put both the Indians as well as the outside world absolutely on the wrong track. Unless it were satisfactorily shown that the Indian mind was equally adapted both to the secular as well as the sacred side of life, no considerable progress could be made in economic life.<sup>62</sup> We had great generals like Shiwaji, Hyder Ali, and Ranjit Singh. We now had at least some great scientists like Jagdish Bose. The Parsis were an enterprising and industrially capable race; so were the Bhatias, the Khojas, and the merchants of Sindh. We were in the past a great commercial people. All this was sufficient to overthrow the theory of our constitutional incapacity. "We see a very wealthy nation with organised guilds of artisans, a flourishing inland commerce, a large export and import trade. We hear of busy and flourishing ports through which the manufactures of India flowed out to Europe, to Arabia, and to Persia...Where then has

all this trade gone and what has caused our decline? ”<sup>83</sup>

We are told that our economic decay is due to the marvelous progress in the technical applications of science in Europe. We are told that we have in India nothing but the natural working of economic laws. His Highness points out, however, that this theory also is only partially true. Life had almost departed from Indian industry before Europe had brought her machines to any remarkable development. The real cause of our economic degradation was political in its nature; we owed it to the “ acquisition of political power by the East India Company, and the absorption of India into the growing British Empire.”<sup>84</sup>

This political change had, we are taught by R C Dutt and other writers, the gravest effect on our economic life. The East India Company turned its attention more and more to the production of raw materials “ There were heavy transit duties on inland commerce and there were commercial Residents in every part of the Company’s possessions, who managed to control the work of the local artisans, and so thoroughly that outside their factories all manufactures came to an end.

On this came the protective policy of the British Government, which crushed Indian manufacture by prohibitive duties. Then came the application of steam to manufacture. It is scarcely to be wondered at, if with all this against us at home and abroad, our manufactures declined and with the advance in the improvement of machinery and the initiation of a Free Trade policy, this decline was hastened into ruin...

“Once the manufacturing superiority of India had been transferred to England, it was impossible for the weaker country to recover its position without some measure of protection. Not only was the struggle in itself unequal, but the spectacle of a mighty commerce, overshadowing and dominating ours, flooding our markets and taking away our produce for its factories, induced a profound dejection, helplessness and inertia among our people. Unable to react against that dominating force we came

## 214 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

to believe that the inability was constitutional and inherent in ourselves; there is a tendency, in fact, to hypnotise ourselves into apathy by continued repetition of the formula that Indians as a race are lacking in enterprise, deficient in business faculties, barren in organising power.”<sup>85</sup>

Men see the more obvious fact of the political domination of India by Britain; but more important than the political domination, though connected with it, is the less obvious but equally significant economic domination of India by Great Britain. The Liberals, thus, not only impressed upon the Indian mind the extraordinary poverty of the country but also the exact nature and extent of that poverty and the precise causes from which it had arisen. The economic poverty of this country is due largely to the political factor. This fact has been brought out with a wealth of facts and arguments by men like Ranade and Dutt. “The political domination of one country by another,” says Ranade in a passage which is often quoted, “attracts far more attention than the formidable, though unfelt domination which the capital, enterprise, and skill of one country exercise over the trade and manufactures of another. This latter domination has an insidious influence which paralyses the springs of all the varied activities which together make up the life of a nation”<sup>86</sup> {

The result of this economic domination was to convert this country once great in agriculture, industry, and commerce, into a purely agricultural country, “a plantation growing raw produce to be shipped by British agents in British ships, to be worked into fabric by British skill and capital, and to be re-exported to the Dependency by British merchants to their corresponding British firms in India and elsewhere.”<sup>87</sup>

### 3. Political Drain: Military Expenditure.

Indian poverty is naturally a complex fact—the result of many causes, some of which are political, while others are economic and social. But the political factor, according to this school,

overshadows all others. The tragic history of the slow economic decline of this great people has been traced both by British and Indian writers. But another factor that has been equally operative all along is what is known as "the drain." Indian imports were worth roughly about one hundred crores of rupees a year; but her exports, on the other hand, amounted to nearly one hundred and fifty crores a year. A part of this excess of exports is met by precious metals. Then there are nearly thirty or forty crores to be accounted for. English capital to the tune of more than 400 crores, has been invested in railways, indigo, tea and other industries : and India has to pay a reasonable rate of interest on it. Thus India has to pay nearly ten crores on account of her industrial domination by England. The remaining twenty or thirty crores constitute a sort of political tribute to England. Under this head come a large part of what are called "Home Charges" money spent in England for India. Then there are the savings of European merchants, doctors, lawyers and such other persons. Then there are the earnings of the English officials and the British troops in the country.

Whatever the explanation or justification of this two-fold drain—political and commercial—may be, the fact of drain cannot be denied. No country in the world can successfully resist the disastrous consequences of this process, rightly called bleeding by Lord Salisbury. The British administration in India, therefore, has in more than one way resulted in the fearful impoverishment of the people. "For a hundred years and more now," said Gokhale, "India has been for members of the dominant race a country where fortunes were to be made to be taken out and spent elsewhere. As in Ireland, the evil of absentee landlordism has in the past aggravated the racial domination of the English over the Irish, so in India what may be called absentee capitalism has been added to the racial ascendancy of Englishmen. A great and ruinous drain of wealth from the country has gone on for many years, the net excess of exports over imports (including treasure) during the last forty years amounting to no less than a thousand millions sterling."<sup>8</sup>

A third important factor, leading to the growing impoverishment of the people is the heavy expenditure, occasional and recurrent, on the Indian Army. It was emphasised by Gokhale before the Welby Commission that the percentage of the expenditure on the army in India was much higher than elsewhere : e.g. in India it was 35%, while in the United Kingdom it was 19%, in Japan 16% and so on. In no country in the world had the military services absorbed such a large proportion of the Government income. In India it exceeded the civil expenditure by about 2½ crores. Military expenditure in fact "overshadows the whole field of Indian finance and under its chilling shade no healthy development is possible for the people." The army was required for the purpose of the maintenance of British rule in India, and as the maintenance of this rule was at least as much an imperial interest as an Indian interest, the cost should be proportionately divided between India and Great Britain. If India were the strategic frontier of the Empire, surely the defence of such frontier was an imperial responsibility. It had been said that the Indian army was to be a main factor in the maintenance of the balance of power in Asia; and as this was a purely imperial object, the charge also must fall on the imperial exchequer <sup>89</sup>

The Government's frontier and trans-frontier policy was only one factor in the situation. The whole system of military defence in India was based on a policy of distrust of the people of the country; the people were compulsorily disarmed, whole populations were excluded from the army; and reliance was more and more placed on British officers. Unless the people of the country were made to feel that they were ultimately responsible for their own defence and taken into the confidence of the Government, the present highly expensive and comparatively inefficient system of military administration was bound to continue. Our military defence must be placed on a national basis. Gokhale recommended short service for the Indian Army, the creation of Indian reserves and the gradual extension—first to select classes of the community—and then as confidence grew, to all, of the privilege of citizen soldiers. Then only we could have substantial reduc-

tions in the crushing military burdens and the funds would be released for other more useful and productive purposes. Military safety must remain, no doubt, a paramount consideration in a country's policy, but military efficiency was always relative. It must be determined in the case of each country by a combined consideration of the needs of defence and the financial resources of the people. In India, expenditure flowed out of all proportion to the economic capacity of the people, and yet the resulting efficiency was not at all as much as it could be desired. The best safety of the country lay not in piling armament upon armament, but in the genuine contentment and loyalty of the people, and in a policy of non-aggression towards our neighbours. But the British Government in India relied for the defence of the country largely upon a standing army of a more or less mercenary type, officered by the British. The plan was, "financially, the most wasteful conceivable, even as an organization of national defence, it is radically faulty. No pouring out of money like water on mere *standing battalions* can ever give India the military strength and preparedness which other civilized countries possess, while the whole population is disarmed and the process of demartialization continues apace. The policy of placing the main reliance for purposes of defence on a standing army has now been discarded everywhere else, and at the present moment, India is about the only country in the civilized world where the people are debarred from the privileges of citizen-soldiership and from all voluntary participation in the responsibilities of national defence. The whole arrangement is an unnatural one, one may go further and say that it is an impossible one, and if ever unfortunately a day of real stress and danger comes, Government will find it so. What I am anxious to see is the adoption of some plan, whereby while a position of greater self-respect is assigned to us in the work of national defence, the establishments during peace and war times may be separated and thus our finances may be freed from the intolerable pressure of an excessive and ever-growing military expenditure" 190



## 4. Ruralisation of India : the case for State Help.

The Liberals, however, did not despair of the situation. They always hoped that the British Government was capable of becoming more friendly to Indian aspirations and Indian interests. The new Government had opened the country to the commerce of the world; it had developed communications, and it had unparalleled resources and power of organization at its disposal. But the Government was labouring under the influence of a false theory and had adopted a deliberately *laissez faire* attitude in industrial matters. European political thought was fast moving towards a collectivist ideal. The police State, with its negative ideal of allowing full and unfettered play to purely competitive forces within society, was being more and more discredited. The State was expected not to be the organ of the people for taking care of national needs in all matters in which individual and co-operative efforts were not likely to be so effective and economic as national effort. If in Europe the State was attempting more and more tasks in the interests of the nation, there was no reason why in India the State should adopt a different attitude. In India the situation favoured and even demanded most rigorous action on the part of the State more than in Europe. Here, the Government, because it was an European Government, had superior advantages and, therefore, superior obligations, to attempt things which native rules, past or present, could neither achieve nor even think of. Here, in India, the State claimed to be the sole landlord and was certainly the biggest capitalist in the country. The State had already helped the foreign capitalists in the tea, coffee and cinchona plantations, as well as the working of the iron and coal fields. But this was nothing compared with what it could be expected to do, because of its resources and the needs of the country.

The Indian Liberals could not shut their eyes to what was happening in other countries like Germany or Japan. In these countries, it was the initiative of the State which was rapidly and

effectively transforming their essentially medieval organizations into first-rate modern powers. The whole question was not of individual liberty versus State rights; it was a question of expediency. Ranade asked the Government to pioneer new enterprises by lending them the free use of its credit and superior organization. If the Government could subsidize private co-operative effort or guarantee minimum interest to Railway Companies, why could it not do these things? Here was a wide field for the exercise of its rôle of superior wisdom and modern character. "The building up of National, not merely State, credit on broad foundations by helping people to acquire confidence in a free and largely ramified banking system, so advantageously worked in Europe under different forms, has also not been attempted here. There is, lastly, the duty cast on it of utilizing indigenous resources, and organizing them in a way, to produce in India in State factories all the products of skill which the State Departments require in the way of stores. These are only a few of the many directions in which, far more than Exchange and Frontier difficulties, the highest statesmanship will have a field of its own for consideration and action. They will, no doubt, receive such consideration if only the minds of the rulers are thoroughly freed from the fear of offending the so called maxims of rigid economic science."<sup>11</sup>

India had drifted into an economic morass, she had become more and more a mere plantation for the production of raw materials. She was told that that was her natural rôle, she was a country in the torrid zone, and the principle of international and territorial division of labour required both in her interests and in the interests of the world that she should specialize in that task. Nature had decreed - she was asked to believe - that Great Britain and the other European or American countries should work up into a finished form the raw materials produced by her.

But as the Maharaja of Baroda has pointed out, this was a false version of history, a deliberate perversion of facts. India has been certainly, and may always remain in one sense, an agricul-

## 220 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

tural country. But there is no reason why she should not develop manufactures and commerce and thus achieve her proper economic place in the nations of the world. The Indian Liberals have placed before India the ideal of a balanced economic development. It is quite appropriate that the raw materials produced in India should be as far as possible worked up by Indian skill, capital, and enterprise, for the consumption of the Indian public. A co-ordination of the three-fold forms of industrial activity is a permanent national insurance against recurrent dangers, and as such is economically the most beneficial course in the interests of the community.

The exclusive dependence upon agriculture is the one fundamental weakness of the Indian economic system. The official records point out that there is a growth of trade of exports and imports, and this is one of the surest marks of economic prosperity. But this is not an unmixed good: because we are merely perfecting ourselves in the art of growing and exporting raw produce and importing articles manufactured abroad. Fifty years ago, India clothed herself with her own products and even aspired to clothe people in Europe to some extent. The situation has become tragic in the extreme. "Our shipping is not ours; not even the coasting trade is carried on in our bottoms...our banking is not ours...the Insurance and the freight and the commission business is all foreign monopoly and the foreign merchants' hand is seen trafficking with our producers in the remotest and smallest villages. The railways are admittedly foreign monopolies"<sup>92</sup> The result of this complete capture of the Indian market by the outsider has been simply disastrous. The country is "fed, clothed, warmed, washed, lighted, helped and comforted generally by a thousand arts and industries,—in the manipulation of which its sons have every day a decreasing share. Foreign competition, not because it is foreign, but because it is the competition of nature's powers against man's labours—it is the competition of organised skill and science against ignorance and illeness—is transferring the monopoly not only of wealth but

what is more important, of skill, talent, and activity to others."<sup>93</sup>

### 5. The Case for Protection.

The Indian Liberals very early recognised and powerfully expressed their conviction that economics is wider than classical economics and further, that in determining the question of national policy, full consideration must be given to all the factors, economic and non-economic, having any bearing on national welfare. Indian opinion was fast crystallising about a policy of genuine protection to native industry; and this question also they discussed not only from the point of view of orthodox economics, but also from the wider point of view of the general national well-being. Hence, they argued that even if the verdict of economics were clear about the merits of a policy of free trade, it could not be accepted as final. They quoted Mill, who had spoken of Political Economy as "a branch of Social Philosophy, so interlinked with all the other branches that its conclusions even in its own peculiar province are not only true conditionally, subject to interference and counteraction from causes not directly within its scope; while to the character of a practical guide it has no pretension apart from other classes of considerations"<sup>94</sup>

Mr. Telang has given us in a learned paper a full and luminous exposition of the Indian point of view in the problem of Free Trade vs. Protection <sup>95</sup> In every country this battle has raged more or less fiercely, and it must be said that in spite of a strong theoretical case on behalf of Free Trade, the world on the whole has remained protectionist. In India, the policy of the Government has been influenced by the policy of the Government at home, and by the weight of the economic theories in Great Britain, and above all, by the weight of certain imperial interests. But the Indian politician thought it his duty to attack the theoretical case for Free Trade and establish a case for Protection in the existing circumstances of India

A protective duty was objected to in the interests of the Indian

## 222 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

consumers. The price of the article on which the duty falls will surely rise and the result is that the poor consumer is penalised. But this is the immediate result, it does not last for long. If the country otherwise is adapted to the manufacture of that article, the temporary application of a necessary measure of protection will give the desired stimulus to that industry; and eventually not only the producer will gain but also the consumer

It is alleged that protection diverts capital from its natural channels. This argument has force only if the whole capital and labour of the country were already fully and remuneratively employed, a supposition which is never yet realised in any country, but least realised in India. In India, it was capital which was previously idle that turned to the textile industry the moment it got a small measure of protection by the cotton import duty.

It is further stated that protection demoralised and was a clog on industrial progress. Telang pointed out that a distinction must be here drawn between the case of an industry to be newly established and the case of an already established industry to be maintained. There need be no demoralising effect upon the industrial classes where the protection was avowedly given in order to allow an industry the opportunity of taking root and where it was clearly understood that the protection was temporary only.

Protection further was stated to be in principle destructive of all foreign trade.

But it must be understood that India did not want to reverse the natural order of things, but only a course of events brought about by a series of accidents. India should be enabled to produce the articles for which she was by nature fitted, which she was producing right up to the nineteenth century, and which she was disabled from producing largely by political factors. Qualified protection would not lead to "the intellectual and moral loss which would result from the withdrawal of the principal motive to the intercourse of mankind."<sup>96</sup>

It is stated that Protection involves the great evil of State interference with trade and industry. Here also, it was useless, it was mischievous to argue in the abstract. The example of England was misleading. India was just a baby in the field of modern economics, while England was a full-grown being. "With an entirely different civilization from our own such as we now stand face to face with, with entirely different modes of work, with the needs for kinds of knowledge rarely, if ever, cultivated amongst us, our nation is, to all intents and purposes, of immature judgment in the matters we are considering. Without State protection, without State guidance and aid, we should know but little of the resources of our country: knowing these resources, we should have no knowledge of the modes of developing them; or having a knowledge both of the resources and of their modes of development, we should still be at a loss for the means of developing them, without Government encouragement."<sup>97</sup>

Poverty is permanently the lot of purely agricultural peoples; and with chronic poverty and famines in the land, both the present and the future of India is very dark indeed. If India, therefore, is to develop a many-sided civilisation, worthy of her past tradition, she must make a bid for a certain amount of industrialisation. No one pleads for a policy of an all-round indiscriminate protection for all industries. What is proposed is that if there are some industries to which the country is adapted by reason of its natural possessions and capacities, such manufactures only should be protected for a reasonable period.

The Liberals frequently repeated that there could not be a fair competition between a dwarf and a giant. To talk of free and equal competition between England and India was nonsense. The bracing air of free competition would be welcome to us when our industries found themselves firmly planted on their feet. "It is a mockery and a delusion," said Telang, "to speak of liberty, when the native endeavouring to develop the resources of his country, can be undersold and commercially

ruined by the unlimited competition of the foreigner.”<sup>98</sup> The Government should, therefore, be advised, both on principles of economic science and on the wider considerations of general welfare, to give a fair trial to a qualified discriminating type of protection to certain limited industries to which the country was adapted, for a temporary period.

Dadabhai repeatedly prayed to the authorities not to kill the goose that laid the golden egg. The Liberals following him have always tried to show that in the long run whatsoever benefits India economically is bound to benefit the Empire also. A contented India, a prosperous India, a progressive India would be a source of unlimited strength to the Empire. If India could materially improve and her purchasing power rose, she would be a better market for the goods of Great Britain; and this was the view which Liberal statesmen in Great Britain sometimes took. “On the most selfish view,” said Macaulay, “it would be far better for us that the people of India were well-governed and independent of us, than ill-governed and subject to us, that they were ruled by their own kings but wearing our broad-cloth and working with our cutlery, than that they were performing their salaams to English collectors and English magistrates, but were too ignorant to value and too poor to buy English manufactures. To trade with civilized men is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages. That would be doting wisdom which would keep a hundred million of men from being our consumers in order that they may be our slaves.”<sup>99</sup>

Indian public opinion has been, therefore, on the whole, overwhelmingly protectionist. But here Gokhale uttered a warning. There were two kinds of protection, he said: the right kind and the wrong kind. The right kind of protection gave the necessary stimulus and encouragement to the growing industries of a country; but under it, care was taken to prevent influential combinations, prejudicial to the interests of the general community, from coming into existence. But

under the wrong kind of protection such selfish combinations of interest received support at the expense of the community. He feared that under the existing conditions in India, a policy of free trade was the least harmful and the safest: "otherwise influential interests, influential combinations, influential parties in England, who can have ready access to the Secretary of State, to whom we have no such access, will take the fullest advantage of the situation, and this huge engine of protection, which is a vast power, will be employed, not in the interests of the people of India, but in the interests of those parties."<sup>100</sup> Until, therefore, the Indian nation was strong enough to assert its voice in the supreme government of the country, a policy of Free Trade was on the whole, the best policy of the country.

## 6. The Swadeshi Movement.

Under the existing circumstances, what then is the best line of action for the people? (The Indian Liberals, finding that the Government was not likely for some years to come to take the industries of the country under its special protection, turned in despair to the people.) The old industries were dead or were disappearing fast under the pressure of new forces. (The country was being more and more inundated with cheap machine-made goods from foreign countries, and people were driven more and more to the one permanent industry of the country, viz. agriculture. The annual drain of wealth continued and the people were fast sinking into hopeless poverty. The heroic measure of Swadeshi was then advocated as the one only resource of the people to fight the adverse economic forces in the country.)

("Swadeshi" means "of one's own country." It means that the true national interests, especially economic interests, should be paramount with every son and daughter of India. The essence of the conception is its demand for a genuine patriotism, a real love for and devotion to India's interests by Indians. It is, therefore, in the first place a sentiment; a sentiment to



some extent new and, therefore, revolutionary, a sentiment of Indian nationalism making itself felt in the life of the country "The devotion to motherland," said Gokhale, "which is enshrined in the highest Swadeshi, is an influence so profound and so passionate that its very thought thrills and its actual touch lifts one out of oneself.) India needs to-day above everything else that the gospel of devotion should be preached to high and low, to prince and peasant, in town and hamlet, till the service of motherland becomes with us as overmastering a passion as it is in Japan."<sup>101</sup> At its highest, Swadeshism is "a deep, passionate, fervent, all-embracing love of the motherland.. it invades the whole man, and it will not rest until it has raised the whole man."<sup>102</sup>)

The Swadeshi movement in its essence is a comprehensive national movement—co-extensive with the entire circle of Indian national life. ((But the form of Swadeshism preached by the Indian politicians is what we may call economic Swadeshism) It is meant to encourage and organize the economic life of India on the basis of Indian effort, Indian skill, Indian capital and Indian patriotism, independently of the Government of India. In a general sense, therefore, every attempt by Indians to advance India's economic interests comes under the head of Swadeshi. Gokhale mentions four ways of helping the cause of Swadeshi. The cultivation and diffusion of sound knowledge of the economic conditions of India and of the world and of the ways by which India could best advance her economic interests, is one way of promoting the Swadeshi cause. Capitalists, small and great, could render valuable assistance to the cause by financing Indian industrial enterprise. The spread of technical, scientific and industrial education was another profitable line of action of the Swadeshi spirit. These three ways were, however, open to a limited number of persons. But there is a fourth way, which is open to all Indians; and it was perhaps the only way in which everyone can help the Swadeshi movement. It is to use, as far as possible, the articles manufactured in the country and to preach

to others that they should do the same.))

Here, then, was a field in which every Indian could do something. It meant a little voluntary sacrifice on the part of every one; a sacrifice which gave him or her an opportunity to show his or her love for the country in a concrete form. It was difficult for an ignorant rustic to understand the complexities of Indian political problem. What did he understand about the merits or demerits of a representative government? But he understood one at once when he was asked to do his mite in removing or modifying the poverty of the country by trying in his own humble way to keep the wealth of the country in the country, by using Swadeshi articles <sup>102</sup>

(The Swadeshi movement, therefore, became the rallying cry of all India.) It opened a field for the expression in a practical form of the patriotic spirit of every Indian—a form equally in the interests of all classes and castes. (It marked, therefore, a turning-point in the history of the Indian national movement.) (The national struggle ceased to be merely a verbal agitation,)—a fight on the platform or in the press; (it began to assume a practical form.) Secondly, the struggle now began to extend from the classes to the masses. The earlier efforts of the Congress were meant to bring the educated community throughout the country on to a common platform. (Swadeshim was meant to bring the classes and the masses upon a common platform.) An official said, “Mr. Bose, if the masses were to interest themselves in public affairs, the Government of the country would have to be conducted upon totally different principles.” <sup>103</sup> (The Swadeshi movement was precisely an effort to interest the masses of the country actively in her problems)

(Thirdly, the movement marked a stage when people began to look to themselves more and more for their salvation and less and less to the Government. The Swadeshi movement was essentially a movement of self-reliance. It was the first serious attempt on the part of the Indians to take their economic desti-

nies into their own hands.) Mr. R. C. Dutt said, "Gentlemen, the Swadeshi movement is one which all nations on earth are seeking to adopt in the present day. Mr. Chamberlain is seeking to adopt it by a system of protection. Mr. Balfour seeks to adopt it by a scheme of retaliation. France, Germany, the U. S. A. and all the British colonies adopt it by building up a wall of prohibitions. We have no control over our fiscal legislation and we adopt the Swadeshi scheme, therefore, by the laudable resolution to use our home manufactures, as far as practicable, in preference to foreign manufactures. It will relieve millions of weavers and other artisans from the state of semi-starvation in which they have lived and bring them back to their handloom and other industries, and will minimise the terrible effects of famines which the Government have always endeavoured to relieve to the best of their power. It will give a new impetus to our manufactures which need such impetus...In one word, it will give a new life to our industrial enterprises. If we succeed in this noble endeavour, we shall present to the world an instance, unparalleled in the history of modern times, of a nation protecting its manufactures and industries without protective duties."<sup>105</sup>

(Fourthly, the Swadeshi movement brought into relief and lay very just emphasis on the economic factor in the Indian problem.) (It was the economic problem which gradually overshadowed the Indian political and social scene; and in taking their stand upon this problem, the Indian politicians lay their finger on the exact source of India's hundred and one difficulties and the exact nature of the remedy which would in course of time remove or modify India's grievances.) (Gokhale said rightly: "The Swadeshi movement has come here to stay. We often have movements which make a little noise for a time and then disappear without leaving any permanent mark behind. I think it safe to say that the Swadeshi movement is not going to be one of that kind, and my own personal conviction is that in this movement we shall ultimately find the salvation of India"<sup>106</sup>)

(Swadeshi, as generally understood, stood for a policy of

guaranteeing a market for the articles manufactured in India in their early stage, when their quality was inferior and their prices higher than the articles imported from abroad. Indian industry required raw materials, technical skill, capital, and, above all, a market.) It was the demand which tended to be the dominant factor, giving direction, substance, shape to productive activity. There was set up a regular competition for markets all over the world. The Indian producers should have a prior claim over the Indian market. (They had no Government to protect them, to set them on their feet in their early and difficult days. On the other hand, their Government stood primarily for British industrial and commercial interests and had converted India into a vast plantation for the production of mere raw materials for their finished goods.) The competition between these organised nations and the unorganised industry of India was manifestly unequal. The so-called purely economic forces, if allowed to operate unchecked, would finish India's economic ruin. (In these circumstances, the Indian politicians turned to their one resource, and asked their countrymen to place India's interests in the forefront and to give an honest trial to the industrial and manufacturing talent of their countrymen.) There was a conflict—an apparent conflict—between the temporary interests of the consumers and the interests of the producers. The whole appeal was directed to the patriotic instinct of the consumer, who was called upon to prefer a costly and unsuitable article to a cheap and refined one, in the permanent economic interests of both consumers and producers.

( India was no longer cut off from the rest of the world. Her economic isolation was a thing of the past.) Whether she liked it or not, her destiny was switched on to the currents of international trade. (She had become one of the prizes—an object of ambition to the financial and industrial magnates of the advanced nations of the world. In order to avoid a fight with other great powers, Great Britain, on the whole, had stood for a policy of an open door for all—an unrestricted right of exploita-

tion to any and every nation of the world.) "The ordinary weapon used by these nations," said Diwan Ambalal, "is that of making their goods cheap to the consumer, of lessening the cost of transport by subsidizing shipping lines, of practising economies in production, and utilising scientific inventions. They rely in the last resort on an appeal to the *avarice* of the foreign consumer. Now it is permissible to inquire why a nation situated like ours and deprived of all means of enforcing its will by collective action, may not seek to extend its industries by appealing to a higher sentiment than avarice, viz. patriotism."<sup>107</sup> Thus, the Swadeshi movement was the assertion of the economic instinct for self-preservation on the part of India against the world-forces which were let loose upon her in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.)

(The Swadeshi movement as confined to the consumption of goods produced in India did not go very far, there was Swadeshi as applied to the production as well as distribution of goods. The ideal of Swadeshi was the building up of an economically self-sufficient India as regards all essentials. It meant the development of our industries, our own manufactures, our own banking and financing institutions, our railways, our navigation, our commerce. It also meant the reconstruction of our entire educational system. It meant the organization of the whole economic life of India by Indians, with Indian labour, Indian capital, Indian raw materials, Indian skill and enterprise, and above all, in Indian interests.)

(The Indian Liberals took care to emphasise the purely economic aspect of Swadeshi in order to avoid misunderstandings in the mind of the British people and the Government. The movement was based on the love of the country, not the hatred of the foreigner. "Swadeshism," said Bannerjee, "does not exclude foreign ideals or foreign learning or foreign arts and industries, but insists that they shall be assimilated into the national system, be moulded after the national pattern, and be incorporated into the life of the nation."<sup>108</sup> Ranade suggested that the economic sphere was one where all shades of opinion, all differences of

views on social, political and religious subjects, might unite and co-operate. "Here we eschew politics altogether, for there is really no conflict of interest between the rulers and the ruled, who all alike desire to promote the industrial and economic progress of the country."<sup>109</sup>)

(Swadeshi is superior, to some extent, from the economic and political points of view, to State protection. It takes its stand on a voluntary co-operation on the part of the consumers; the element of compulsion which was present in a policy of protection was absent here. The Swadeshi movement made a moral appeal to the national idealism of the consumers, there was no such appeal in a policy of protection. Swadeshi did not involve countries in tariff wars, as a policy of protection did. Swadeshi did not attempt to secure by legislation concessions, favourable to certain groups as a policy of protection did. Its one weakness was that it depended for its continuous application on the patriotic sentiment of the consumers, it was here that a policy of protection had been found to be a superior weapon, because the weak, hesitating, selfish, uninformed consumer had to accept the policy followed by the State "The present excitement," said Arundale, "cannot last for ever; and then these associations, companies, firms, and what not, which have had a hot-house growth under the exceptional warmth of popular favour will burst, as the South Sea Bubble burst, and the last condition will be worse than the first, for people will begin to mistrust." <sup>110</sup>

Swadeshi, however, is to be sharply distinguished from 'boycott'. The Moderates reluctantly granted that a resort to boycott of foreign or British goods might be justified only on extreme occasions. "On an extreme occasion, a boycotting demonstration is perfectly legitimate, but that occasion must be one to drive all the classes, as in Bengal, to act with one impulse and make all leaders sink their present differences in the presence of a common danger."<sup>111</sup> The fundamental objection to boycott from the Liberal point of view was that it was based on the hatred of the foreigner, and not on the love

## 232 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

of one's country. It had unsavoury associations; it implied a vindictive desire to injure another. It was bound to raise angry passions on both sides; and it threatened to embitter the normal relationships between the two peoples. It, therefore, provoked retaliation, and the results would be disastrous to India. Secondly, here were obvious risks involved in its failure; and the weapon could not be used with sufficient effectiveness, unless it had behind it an extraordinary upheaval of popular feeling. In the very nature of things, such an upheaval of emotion could not last for a long time; and the boycott was bound to fizzle out. Thirdly, it could not be reasonably directed against the whole world, and if it was directed against British goods only, it left us free to purchase the goods of other foreign countries, and the cause of Indian industry did not gain at all. Fourthly, boycott was indiscriminate, it shut out certain non-Indian goods without considering the fact that they were capable of being economically produced in India or not. Fifthly, a strict boycott of foreign goods was not practicable at all under our present industrial conditions; "for when you boycott foreign goods, you must not touch even a particle of imported articles; and we only make ourselves ridiculous by talking of a resolution which we cannot enforce."

In all these respects, Swadeshi was necessarily a superior weapon. Politically, it worked by conciliating and not by alienating the British opinion which certainly counted. Economically, it carefully discriminated between goods which could be produced in India and goods which could not be equally economically produced in India, and concentrated on the former. Morally, it was a tremendous constructive force, while boycott was merely negative and destructive. "It turns their thoughts to their country, accustoms them to the idea of voluntarily making some sacrifice for her sake, enables them to take an intelligent interest in her economic development, and teaches them the important lesson of co-operating with one another for a national end."<sup>11</sup>

The Moderates accordingly advised the country to prefer a policy of Swadeshi, which might look tame and unexciting com-

pared to the more sensational policy of boycott, and further tried to preach economic Swadeshism, divorced from controversial and sometimes heated politics. They felt that if Swadeshi were mixed with politics, both would suffer. As one of their leaders put it, "As a political force, it might do for a time, but real politics are concerned with the golden doctrines of silence and not with the silvery speeches, and whether these speeches and writings might not expose us to unforeseen dangers is a phase which the thinking public of the country might take into consideration. A sword is an instrument which will no doubt cut, but it requires some force at its back to be effective; if any person handles a sharp instrument, he stands the chance of being cut by his own weapon."<sup>113</sup>

#### 7. Weaknesses of the Situation.

The impact of economic forces was now being more and more felt: and the Indian industrial interests were beginning to be conscious of the necessity of putting their economic house in order. The liberal politicians continued, of course, their ceaseless and very relevant criticism of the policy of the Government in taxation, currency, expenditure and land revenue, but they slowly began to realise that unless they took their affairs into their own hands, things would not much improve. A mood of introspection came upon them; and they turned their eyes to the weaknesses of their own countrymen. His Highness the Maharaja of Baroda, with his usual shrewdness and penetration, exposed clearly and mercilessly the possibilities—good and evil—inherent in the political system fastened upon India as well as those inherent in the social and religious systems of the Indians. "Our weakness," he said, "lies in this, that we have for many years lain prostrate under a fictitious sense of our own helplessness and made no adequate attempt to react against our circumstances. We have succumbed where we should have exhausted every possibility of resistance and remedy"<sup>114</sup> It is caste which has made us a stationary people, wedded to old customs, and incapable of



adopting the new ones. It prevents us from choosing the line of activity most consonant with our abilities, or from seeking abroad the knowledge of new industries. The restrictions against foreign travel constitutes one of the most serious obstacles to our commercial success. How absurd it is that a mercantile community like the Bhatias cannot go to Europe or America under the influence of caste!

"One of the worst results, it may be of the continuous foreign rule, is that we have lost all confidence in ourselves. How can we start new industries or build up new trade, if we have no confidence in ourselves? The initial years are bound to be trying years, 'when the only dividend is hope, and the best assets an unfaltering courage and faith in oneself.'"<sup>115</sup> How could we build up a credit system if we had no confidence in one another? "It is this want of co-operation, this mutual distrust which paralyses Indian industry, ruins the statesmen, and discredits the individual even in his own household. I believe that this trait of our character, though in some cases arising from our obvious defects and instances of actual misconduct among ourselves, is mainly due to the fact that the nation has long been split up into incoherent units, but also to the ignorance and restricted vision which result from our own exclusiveness. Our view of the conduct of friends, of the policies of administration, of the success and integrity of commercial undertakings, are all vitiated by a readiness to believe the worst. It is only when we learn to suspend judgment and know the man and the motive before we criticise, that we shall be able to repose trust where trust is due. We must stiffen our character and educate ourselves up to a higher moral standard."<sup>116</sup>

India must realise that salvation did not lie in a blind and meaningless adherence to some imaginary or historical past. Granted that our system was a glorious one at one time, it did not follow that it could continue to be the same for two thousand years without any change. There had been a record of steady decline in our standards during the last 1500 years. In

clinging to our obsolete institutions, we were clinging to the very tendencies, the very forces, that had dragged us down. The old order must go and give place to the new. The old régime of custom and prejudice must be replaced by a new Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity—"a liberty of action, equality of opportunity and the fraternity of a great national ideal."<sup>117</sup> If India wanted to start her career of economic progress and prosperity, she must be prepared to part with or modify or recast many of her old cherished beliefs and institutions. "There is no reality in our social reform, our political progress, our industrial revival, because as you know, there is scarcely one of us who dares to act even in his own household."<sup>118</sup>

Look at the West, and what did they notice? His Highness drew attention to four historical movements. The first was the capitalistic organisation of industries, with its attendant system of credit, banks and exchanges, with its economy of production and its facility of distribution. The second movement was the separation of the ecclesiastical and social life, and the taking of social, political and commercial affairs, which was purely secular in nature, out of the hands of the priests. "I merely desire to point out that in so far as India's religious ideas tend to keep many of our brightest and best minds out of practical affairs, out of the scientific, political, and commercial relations of the time, by so far do the religious and philosophical systems stand in the way of her progress towards economic independence. Why have the people of India been tardy in grasping the scientific principles of Western industrial organisation? We must look well to the religious and social foundations of our national life. Break the monopoly of caste prerogatives and social privileges. They are self-arrogated, and are no more inherent in any one caste than commercial predominance or political supremacy in one nation."<sup>119</sup>

The third great current in the West was the spirit of nationalism. Throughout Europe, petty states and warring principalities had given way to strong, compact, and homogenous nations,

## 236 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

each working through the patriotic impulse of all its people for the preservation of national well-being. But we in India were disunited and incapable of unselfish co-operation for national ends.

The last movement in Europe which had gone towards the making of the present civilization is the marvellous development of science.

India's part in these great movements had been shamefully small. India must make a supreme effort to shake off all those parts of her past which merely serve as so much deadweight. She must no longer build on caste; she must build the new order on the principle of individual freedom. The masses must be trained to a sense of their paramount importance and dignity in the social structure. Mechanical inventions were slow in developing in India, because mechanical work was left to hereditary castes somewhat low in the scale of society. The intellectual classes had been divorced from manual industry for thousands of years. This divorce between the brain and the hand had been fatal to our society. "The nation that despises its humblest castes, that provides for them no opportunity to rise in the social scale and in self-esteem, is building its house upon the sand. The wealth of a nation is the quality of its manhood" <sup>120</sup>

If we were to fight the West, we must cultivate the Western spirit and fight it with the Western weapons. The grim law of the survival of the fittest prevails in this world. An unintelligent adherence to stupid and obsolete customs of the past would surely lead us to complete destruction. It was no use despising a foreign civilisation; we must understand it and, if necessary, assimilate as much of it as is necessary for our advance. "If the rush of the steam engine and the whiz of electricity, combined with cheap and easy means of transport have succeeded in dumping your bazaars with the cheap and attractive products of foreign marts, rise to the occasion and learn how to withstand the inroad with intelligent anticipation and skilful adaptation." <sup>121</sup>

Mere traditional belief, mere reactionary sentiment or sentiment of respect for the past, mere emotional patriotism would not save us against the onslaught of the West. We must master the technique of modern industrialism or we perished.

The ultimate remedy lay in our own hands. This idea now begins to dawn upon the Indian horizon. A new realistic spirit which faced facts and a new optimism which believed in the possibilities of the country working her own salvation were in the air. It was no use being dreamy and self-contained, and turning back from our present opportunities to a past which could not be recalled. It was true that we had to work against heavy odds: old traditions, poverty of resources, the hostile competition of advanced races and the free-trade competition of the Government; but these difficulties should only sharpen our wits and stiffen our muscles. Thus Ranade emphasised facts which made for our economic betterment: "Natural aptitudes, undeveloped but unlimited resources, peace and order, the whole world open to us, our marvellous situation as the Emporium of all Asia, these priceless advantages will secure success, if we endeavour to deserve it by striving for it. This is the creed which will ensure a permanent triumph of the modern spirit in this Ancient Land"<sup>122</sup>

#### **8. Necessity for Industrialisation.**

It is thus clear that the Indian Liberals were out to realise the modern ideal of industrialisation for India. India was in the past an economically advanced country; there was no reason why she should not once more take her place along with the other great industrial nations. Here, again, we find in His Highness the Maharaja of Baroda a fearless and outspoken exponent of this ideal. If we were all that we could be, and should be, economically, there would be no need for any gospel of Swadeshi. The Swadeshi was essentially a recognition of our national weakness in matters scientific and industrial, and a determined effort to

overcome it. The ideal behind Swadeshi was the ideal of economic freedom, of industrial self-sufficiency. This ideal could not be achieved by our fighting shy of Western industrialism. What was industrialism? It was the application of scientific invention and collective capital to the production and distribution of all the articles required by society to satisfy its wants.

India had to choose between the ideal of a purely agricultural economy, supplemented by a few handicraft industries and the ideal of an industrial society making full use of all modern devices to bring to the highest level possible, both in quality and quantity, her production. The Indian Liberals had no illusions on this matter. They wanted a complete economic transformation of society. They were wholeheartedly for large-scale production, for a capitalistic organization of Indian resources. Compare, His Highness said, the condition of our handicraftsmen of India, working from day to day, from century to century, for the minimum of subsistence, with the condition of the factory labourer of the West, begrimed it may be with soot, but nevertheless on the whole well-fed and well-housed. It was true that the workman under the industrial régime lost to some extent his independence, that he tended to become the slave of a machine. But we had to consider the tremendous accumulation of wealth and the diversified production, which industrialism brought. Under industrialism, a larger proportion of the population was acquiring wealth, and the whole mass of the people was lifted up to a higher standard of living. It was true that vast private fortunes were made; but these did not constitute treasure privately hoarded; they consisted in stocks, bonds, and securities which were representative of factories, railroads, mines and other agencies of production and distribution, through which the labourer of all trades obtained his employment and wages

Private fortunes acquired under this system, made for public welfare. The worker got a higher wage and lived on a better plane than would be possible under the old handicraft organisation of industries. Secondly, the foodstuffs could under this

system be transferred easily in large masses from continent to continent, from place to place, thus making starvation and famine comparatively rare. Thirdly, this system of mass production led to the diffusion and development of culture to an extent previously unknown. Schools, colleges, libraries, museums, art galleries, hospitals, multiplied until they were brought within the reach of every class of society, even the lowest. Thus, the door of opportunity opened for every individual.

The development of industry had enabled mankind to transfer a large part of their drudgery to machine. The masses would always work. The real question was which economic system led on the whole to the higher standard of living, the larger opportunity of the education of children, and the slow but steady development of the individual personality of the workman?

Industrialism in India was bound to make not only for material prosperity but also for moral progress. The whole outlook of the people was bound to change. Petty chicanery and craftiness would give way to an increasing straightforwardness of dealing between men and men. We should slowly evolve under its influence a higher standard of commercial morality. It would give us also an increasing capacity for political affairs; for business was a good school for many administrative qualities.

"It is my profound conviction," concludes the Maharaja of Baroda, "therefore, that the line of least resistance in the progress of India at this time lies in the hard, sturdy, and consistent application of the paraphernalia of industrialism to Indian conditions. Only in this manner can we as a people expect ever to enter the heaven of economic independence. As the West owes its progress of the last couple of centuries to the application of scientific invention to all phases of life, so India must look to the same formula. I do not in the least minimise the necessity of reform in the social organism and reform in the political administration, but change in these directions is apt to be slow unless forced from beneath by an ever-increasing sense of industrial

independence and economic self-respect."<sup>123</sup>

But complete and unqualified Westernisation was neither possible nor desirable for India. There was much in the Western industrialism which was positively bad. The centralisation of population in over-grown industrial centres constituted a menace to the future of the races in the West. These had created many problems of administration, of morals, of public health which even the West with all its ingenuity, had not been able to solve. The air in the West was surcharged with a spirit of greed. There was everywhere a sordid worship of material wealth and power.

Hence, we must not forget our petty handicrafts and cottage industries. These added to the wealth and comfort of the people without bringing in their train all the evils of industrialism. "India," said His Highness the Gaekwad, "is and will always remain a country of cottage industries. Where hundreds and thousands can work in mills and factories, millions and tens of millions work in their own huts; and the idea of greatly improving the condition of the labourers of India merely by adding to mills and factories, is only possible for those who form their opinions six thousand miles away. No, gentlemen, any comprehensive plan of improving the condition of our industrial classes must seek to help the dwellers in cottages."<sup>124</sup>

## 12. CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM.

### 1. Failure of Bureaucratic Rule.

Indian public opinion was gradually becoming more and more conscious of the radical incapacity of the existing administrative machinery with its old and obsolete ideals, to cope with the Indian problem. As this conviction deepened, the ideal of good and enlightened government gave way to a different ideal of a modified type of self-government.

The administration of India was largely in the hands of the bureaucracy the standing body of Indian Civil Servants. There

is no doubt that the members of the bureaucracy brought to their work a high level of ability and a keen sense of duty. There was also a sincere desire to do what good they could do to the people "within the limits of the restricted opportunities permitted by the predominance of other interests"<sup>125</sup> What was wrong with them then? In the first place, they have come to constitute a caste, with all the exclusiveness and love of monopoly which characterised castes. The uncontrolled power which they possessed impaired their sense of responsibility and made them intolerant of criticism. Secondly, they were satisfied with their own positions and they wanted the people, therefore, to be satisfied with theirs. Hence, they generally placed themselves on the side of the existing order and the reforms which they disapproved of had, as a rule, little chance of being adopted. Thirdly, most of them were mere birds of passage; the moment they earned their pensions, they returned to their country. All the experience they acquired in this country was lost to her; and this went on generation after generation. Even if any individual civil servant were inclined to do some good to the country, he was not important enough because of the centralised character of the system. All great measures could only emanate from the centre; but the centre consisted of men who held office for five years, and then went back to England. Thus, no one was interested in or permanently identified with the interests of the people. Fourthly, the officials looked at every question from the standpoint of their own power. The interests of the people were, therefore, often sacrificed at the altar of the interests of the service. "You, thus, see the revenue of this country eaten up by the enormous and steadily growing military expenditure, the increasing home charges, and the extravagant salaries paid to the English officials, while next to nothing is spent on primary education, and industrial education is absolutely neglected."<sup>126</sup> Fifthly, the system shut out the educated classes from power and responsibility. Our natural abilities, therefore, slowly disappeared owing to sheer disuse, and the growth of the educated class which had no part or lot in the administration of their coun-



try, made for a state of acute discontent all over the country.

The highest ideal of British rule in India had been efficiency. It was true that the system of Government had realised this ideal to some extent, by introducing into the country the appliances of material civilization and by elaborating a modern type of administrative machinery in the country. But the efficiency which the country could get from an enlightened foreign administration could be only a mechanical efficiency. The higher efficiency which would come of self-government could never be the result of the present system. Machinery was, after all, a means to an end—it was not the end itself.

Thus, in India, the constitutional aspirations of the people were outgrowing the administrative machinery. In 1911, Pundit Dhar put the case against the bureaucracy in a nutshell from the Congress Presidential platform. "The root cause of most of our misfortunes which, if not corrected, forebodes serious disasters in the future, is the growth of an unsympathetic and illiberal spirit in the bureaucracy towards the new-born hopes and ideals of the Indian people. While a new India has gradually been rising up, that spirit, too, has been growing, and so the critical situation has arisen, on the one hand, the educated classes, filled with new knowledge and conscious of new political rights, but hampered by the bars and fetters of a system perhaps good enough for other days, but now obsolete; on the other, the bureaucracy with its vested interests, its domineering habits, its old traditions of obsolete and unquestioned authority, suspicious of knowledge, and adverse to innovation like every close corporation, but cut off from the people by its racial exclusiveness, and wedded to a paternal system of Government, under which it has so long enjoyed power and pelf, but which is discordant with the more liberal ideas of the present day."<sup>127</sup>

Bhupendranath Basu presided over the Congress in 1914. He summed up even more powerfully the Indian case against the government of India by a foreign and, therefore, unsympathetic

Civil Service. "The Government of the country was still vested," he said, "in a foreign civil service, there being only 70 Indians out of a cadre of 1,400 men. This service remained, while all the higher officers came and went, and it was responsible to no one. They form the Executive Council of the Viceroy, save for one Indian member; the India Council, save for two. They are, thus, their own court of appeal. Six Governments out of nine are furnished by them with rulers. All the great departments of the State are under their control. They could be more than human if they did not desire to remain as they are.

"Against this state of things, we have a people rapidly awakening to consciousness, thousands of our boys are receiving education on Western lines in Indian Universities, based on Western models; hundreds of them are daily flocking to the Universities of Europe, America, and Japan, and on their return home, spreading the knowledge that they have acquired. You may chain Prometheus, but the fire is lighted and cannot be extinguished. India wants a higher life, a wider sphere of activity and usefulness. India wants that her Government should be consistent with her growing self-respect and intellectuality. India wants that the presumption which has all along existed, and which the Board of Directors in 1833 made a vain attempt to dispel, that Indians can only rise to a certain limit, should be removed from the precincts of her Court, as it has been from the Statute book, and the door to her services should not be closed by artificial barriers against her own sons. India wants that her children should have the same right of equal citizenship as other members of the Empire; and above all, India wants that her Government should be an autonomous Government under the British Empire...

"The Indian bureaucracy does not offer us any constructive programme for the future of India, no land of promise to her children. They are content to work for the day and take no thought for the morrow. An autocratic Viceroy or Secretary of State may put extra steam into the machinery of the Indian

Government, or try to shut the safety valve, but the great fly-wheel is not easily disturbed. And the Bureaucracy have given us honest and conscientious workmen, not troubled, it may be, with the visions of the future, but they have reason to be well-pleased with their work, they have given us internal peace and guarded us from external aggression; the blessings of an ordered administration are apparent on every side. Why should India resent? Her Government has always been that of one man's sway, whether she was an Empire or broken into small states of varying dimensions. Why should she object to the Government of an outlandish bureaucracy? My answer is 'the days of the lotus-eater are gone; the world is swinging onward to the uplifting ropes of time, and in Europe, the war of nations, now in progress, will knock off the last weights of medieval domination of one man over many, of one race over another; it is not possible to roll back the tide of wider life which is flowing like the warm gulf stream through the gateways of the West into the still waters of the East. You may abolish the study of English history and draw a sponge over all its enthralling story of freedom; you may bar Milton and Burke, Mill and Spencer; you may bend the Indian Universities to your will, if you like, fetter their feet with obstructive statutes, but you cannot bar the imponderable influences of an expanding world. If English rule in India meant the canonisation of a bureaucracy, if it meant perpetual domination and perpetual tutelage, an increasing deadweight on the soul of India, it would be a curse to civilisation and a blot on humanity. '128

The form of government in this country might be characterised as despotism. Now, the despotic system of government is not necessarily a bad system of government; it is eminently suited to certain peoples at certain stages of culture. In the early years of British rule, such a system was a necessity. It fostered liberal education, established justice, restored peace and order in the country, introduced a limited form of self-government in the local concerns of the people, admitted the children of the soil to a limited extent into the administration of the country, and broad-

ened and liberalised the administration. But it could not do more. It degenerated into a system of barren bureaucracy, not accountable to the people, but responsible only to itself. "It is essentially conservative in its temperament and thoroughly unprogressive in its character. Its efficiency is indisputable, its honesty and integrity beyond all question; but it is bound hand and foot to a form, a precedent lacking in life and soul. It can contract but it cannot expand. It holds all the threads of the administration within the hollow of its palm and can ill afford either to release or to relax any one of them. It is extremely jealous of its powers and intolerant of criticism. It sincerely wishes to see the people happy and contented only it cannot allow them to grow. It has its idea of beauty and its Chinese shoe to give effect to it, however painful to its subject the operation may be. Like Narcissus of old, it is so much entranced with the loveliness of its own shadow that it has neither the leisure nor the inclination to contemplate beauty in others" <sup>129</sup>

The fundamental defect of the existing form of government in India was that everything was done *for* the people and nothing *by* the people. Such a government made the people incapable of helping themselves. It might make men happy, but it could never make them resourceful or self-reliant. Mr. Muzumdar, in 1916, thoroughly exposed the inadequacy, both from the point of democratic ideals and of administrative efficiency, of the government of India by a foreign bureaucracy. There could be only one patriot in a benevolent despotism and that was the Government. The whole mass of the people became a mere drag both on themselves and on the Government.

## 2. The South African Agitation.

Thus, the Indian liberals became every year more and more convinced of the necessity of a radical change in the very form of government. Most of their demands remained unfulfilled: universal education for which they stood was not forthcoming; military expenditure went on increasing, and the policy of distrust

and suspicion continued; the policy of free trade was persisted in almost to the complete ruin of Indian industries: and now a policy of repression was adopted to stamp out the radical elements of society.

There was yet another source of irritation which further convinced them that the Indian Government could not be counted upon to champion their interests with vigour and success. This was the colonial grievance.

The abolition of slavery by Great Britain, in 1833, created a demand for cheap but reliable labour force in South Africa. Negro labour could no longer be relied upon: the negro was not accustomed to hard work, and did not care much for money. The English settlers in Natal negotiated with the Government of India for the supply of labour; and the first batch of indentured labourers from India reached Natal in 1860. These Indian labourers were followed by Indian traders, who traded not only with the indentured labourers but with negroes as well. The indentured labourers became free after five years; and many of them settled there as free Indians. Some of these Indians went to the Transvaal, the Free State, and the Cape Colony. Their children also very often settled there.

The European planters welcomed semi-slave labour; but they could not be reconciled to free Indians or Indian traders. Their monopoly of exploitation was disturbed, and they started an agitation against the Indians. In 1893, an annual poll tax of three pounds was imposed on the Indians. As most of the labourers had a wife and two or three children, the tax amounted virtually to twelve pounds a year.

Some Indians began to use their privilege for voting in the election for the legislative assembly of Natal. To shut them out a Bill was passed excluding Indians as Indians from franchise. The Indians at once started an agitation and sent a memorial with ten thousand signatures to Lord Ripon, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Lord Ripon disallowed the Bill, on the

ground that the British Empire could not agree to the establishment of a colour bar in legislation. This was a great victory for the Indians.

But the Europeans continued their anti-Indian agitation. They were afraid of being swamped by Indians both in politics and in trade. An Act was passed prohibiting every one from trading without a licence. This meant much hardship to Indians. Another Act required those who would enter the colony to pass an education test in a European language.

The same agitation against Indians, resulting in similar anti-Indian legislation, developed in the Transvaal, the Free State and the Cape Colony. The success of the Indian traders excited the jealousy of the Europeans everywhere. In their petitions against Indians we find such sentiments as these: "These Indians have no sense of human decency. They suffer from loathsome diseases. They consider every woman as their prey. They believe that women have no souls."<sup>130</sup> President Kruger said to a deputation of Indians in the Transvaal, "You are the descendants of Ishmael and, therefore, from your very birth bound to slave for the descendants of Esau; we cannot admit you to rights placing you on an equality with ourselves. You must rest content with what rights we grant you."<sup>131</sup>

In 1895, a registration fee of three pounds was fixed for Indians. Indians were allowed to own fixed property in localities specially set apart for their residence by the Transvaal Government. These locations were selected in dirty places far away from the towns, where there was no water-supply, no lighting arrangement and no sanitary service.

— In the Free State, a law was passed expelling all Indian traders, who were given nominal compensation.

In the Cape Colony, Indian children were not allowed to attend public schools and Indian travellers could hardly secure accommodation in hotels

The Indian National Congress very early took up the question of the grievances of Indians abroad. Mr. Pillai said, in 1896, at the twelfth Congress: "In India we are permitted to become members of the Imperial Legislative Council. In England, even the doors of that august assembly, the House of Commons, are open to us. But in South Africa, we are not permitted to travel without a pass, we are not allowed to walk about in the night, we are consigned to locations, we are denied admission to the first and second classes on railways, we are driven out of tramcars, we are pushed off footpaths, we are kept out of hotels, we are refused the benefit of public baths, we are spat upon, we are hissed, we are cursed, we are abused, and we are subjected to a variety of other indignities, which no human being can possibly endure."<sup>132</sup> Mr. Kidwai, in 1908, showed no patience with the arguments usually advanced by the European colonists "The passion of earth has been on Europe for a long time past and there is hardly a corner of the world where the white man has not penetrated and which he would not like to make his own. Will the whole world then become the white man's and all the coloured men have to move away from it? If the Transvaal is to be dubbed a white man's country, why should not then also Egypt, or India or Algiers? I fail to see, gentlemen, the logic of this arbitrary theory, that a white man's country should be a forbidden land for coloured men. Nor would the argument that the Indian should not be allowed to live in a country in which Europeans also live, because they lower their standard of living, hold water for a moment. The necessary corollary of that proposition would be that Asiatics may object to Europeans and Americans living in their midst, as their influence and example would lead them to live in a style unsuited to the circumstances of their country. Would the Europeans leave Asia on the ground that the coloured man's continent ought to remain the coloured man's continent?"<sup>133</sup>

The agitation was backed by the Government of India; but it did not bear much fruit. The conviction, therefore, grew

that the Government of India, as long as it was not a fully national government, would not be in a position to give effective protection to the Indian interests abroad.

### 3. The Fight for Representation in Government.

From the very first, the Congress took its stand on the principle of democracy. Side by side with the demand for redress of individual grievances, there developed a demand not only for better administration, but also for a more democratic government. In the very first Congress we hear that "the desire to be governed according to the ideas of Government prevalent in Europe was in no way incompatible with their thorough loyalty to the British Government. All that they desired was that the basis of the Government should be widened, and that people should have their proper and legitimate share in it."<sup>134</sup>

The Indian Liberals became much bolder in the second Congress not only in their criticism of the existing policy of the British Government, but also in their demands for a representative government. The agitation for a national government, at least on the Congress platform, began fairly early. Dr. Rajendralal Mitra pointed out that foreign government could never represent India adequately, simply because it was foreign. "We live not under a National Government, but under a foreign bureaucracy, our rulers are foreigners by birth, religion, language, habits, by everything that divides humanity into different sections. They cannot possibly dive into our hearts; they cannot ascertain our wants, our feelings, our aspirations."<sup>135</sup>

The existing Legislative Councils were declared useless for all purposes in the first Congress. Dadabhai Naoroji pointed out that without representative government, there could not be good government; and without it, he asked, what good was it for India to be under British sway? What difference was there then between the British Government and an Asiatic despotism? In the second Congress, we find Surendranath Bannerjee making



out a case for self-government. "Self-government is the ordering of nature and the will of Divine Providence. Every nation must be the arbiter of its own destinies - such is the omnipotent fiat inscribed by Nature with her own hands and in her own eternal book. But do we govern ourselves? The answer is no. Are we living in an unnatural state? Yes, in the same state in which the patient lives under the ministrations of the physicians. We are passing through a period of probation and a period of trial under the auspices of one of the most freedom-loving nations in the world. And we claim that the period of probation may now fairly terminate, that the leading-strings may be taken off, and the child having emerged into the dawn of mature manhood, may at any rate be partially entrusted with the management of her own affairs. If it were otherwise, the circumstances would imply the gravest slur upon the character of British rule in India, for it would mean that after more than a century of British rule and of English education, we are still unfit to appreciate the principles and the practice in the art of self-government. Our Panchayat system is as old as the hills and is graven on the hearts and instincts of the people. Self-government is, therefore, nothing new to the habits or the ways of thought of the people of India" <sup>136</sup>

In the same session, Pundit Malaviya appealed to the historical and constitutional traditions of the British people in order to make out the absolute reasonableness of the demand of the Indians for representative institutions under the British Government. "It is not to the great British Government that we need demonstrate the utility, the expediency, the necessity of this great reform. It might have been necessary to support our petition for this boon with such a demonstration, were we governed by some despotic monarch, jealous of the duties, ignorant and careless of the rights of subjects; but it is surely unnecessary to say one word in support to the British Government or the British Nation—to the descendants of those brave and great men who fought and died to obtain for themselves and preserve intact for

their children those very institutions which taught by their example, we now crave, who spent their whole lives and shed their hearts' blood so freely in maintaining and developing their cherished principle.

"What is an Englishman without representative institutions? Why, not an Englishman at all, a mere sham, a base imitation, and I often wonder as I look around at our nominally English magnates, how they have the face to call themselves English, and yet deny us representative institutions and struggle to maintain despotic ones. Representative institutions are as much a part of the true Briton as his language and his literature. Will any one tell me that Great Britain will, in cold blood, deny us her free born subjects, the first of these, when by the gift of the latter, she has qualified us to appreciate and incited us to desire it?"

"No taxation without representation. That is the first commandment in the Englishman's Political Bible; how can he falter with his conscience and tax us here, his free and educated fellow-subjects as if we were dumb sheep or cattle? But we are not dumb any longer. India has found a voice at last in this great Congress, and in it, through it, we call on England to be true to her traditions, her instincts, and herself, and grant us our rights as free-born British citizens"<sup>137</sup>

Year after year, the Congress speakers returned to the same subject. The cry for more liberty, more responsibility was repeated in every session of the Congress. The case for a larger share in the Government of one's own country was kept always before the mind of the people as well as the Government. The example of European countries continued to stimulate and inspire the Indian patriots to ask for the same grand life for their own country. Pundit Malaviya drew precedents from the Colonies and made out a strong case for the Indian demand for a fuller political life: and argued that if there was a case for representative institutions in European countries, there was a stronger case for these in India. "Allow me to say," he said in 1887, "this much, that placed as

we are in this country under a foreign Government, however benevolent and generous its motives, we stand in the greatest need of our own representatives in the Legislative Councils. Gentlemen, the whole of Europe, with the exception of Russia, has declared that the most efficient and best form of Government for any country, which has made any advance in civilisation, is a Government conducted not solely by the few for the many, but to a greater or less extent by the many for themselves—a Government, in fact, in which the representatives of the people had some potential share—and if this be expedient for European countries, where the rulers and the ruled are of the same nationality, and where they are of the same religion, I think it must be conceded that it is even more essential for India, which is inhabited by people whose habits, manners, customs, language, race and creed differ from those of their rulers. If we demand for India that there should be representatives of her people in the State Councils, we only ask for what, not simple Europe, but America, Australia and almost the whole civilised world have decided with one unanimous voice to be essential for any Government that is to be suitable to any country, as it is only where the representatives of the people are allowed to take part in the administration, that the wants and wishes, the aspirations and grievances of the people can be adequately set forth, properly understood or duly provided for.

“Gentlemen, it is nothing very great we are asking them to do. The British Government has already made this concession to so many countries. So many colonies, so many British colonies enjoy it. Canada, the Cape, the Australian colonies—all enjoy some measure and most of them the fullest measure of Representative Government. Britain has granted or conceded this concession to all these places. Why should she withhold it from the people of India?”<sup>188</sup>

Pundit Dhar in the same session waxed equally eloquent about the grandeur of the ideal of liberty and maintained that free institutions are the best practical school for mental and moral discipline. “To be called on from time to time to take

part in the affairs of your country, to discuss with the sense of responsibility that power gives, public questions, to have to employ your highest faculties in the management of affairs that have a direct bearing on your country's glory, and on the happiness of her people, these things, I say, are all steps in the education necessary for the unfolding of all the speculative and practical faculties of a nation."<sup>139</sup> It was up to England to give us this instinctive sense of liberty, that robustness of character which are essential to all healthy and progressive national life. "England has moved us from our ancient anchorage. She has cast us adrift against our will, upon the wide waters of a seething proletariat; and we turn back to England, and ask her to grant us that compass of representative institution by which, amid a thousand storms, she has steered her prosperous course to the safe haven of regulated political freedom."<sup>140</sup>

In the fourth session, Mr. Mudaliar quoted the example of Pondicherry and pointed out that if Pondicherry was fit to be represented in the French Government, there was no reason why India was not fit for a similar privilege in the British Government. "England will not as yet allow us the smallest modicum of representative institutions, but in Pondicherry, every man has a right to elect his representative. He enjoys manhood suffrage! Not only that, but the people of Pondicherry have got a member of their own in the Chamber of Deputies and another in the Senate. Then, in Pondicherry itself, they have got a Council which is called the Council General, and which meets every year, and this is an elective body, elected by the whole people. Before this Council is placed the Budget and the Budget is freely discussed by the Members...Gentlemen, it is said that we are not fit for representative institutions, but it is our fellow-countrymen, our relatives in many cases, no better educated than and in no wise different from ourselves, whom the French Government has found to be fitted, not only for the small instalment of representative institutions that we ask for, but fully developed representative institutions, including manhood suffrage, which none of us even dream of demanding."<sup>141</sup>

Charles Bradlaugh attended the fifth session of the Congress. His eloquent plea for freedom rang through Indian ears and gave a fresh inspiration to their struggle. "For whom should I work, if not for the people? Born of the people, trusted by the people, I will die of the people. And I know of no geographical or race limitations."<sup>142</sup> It is true, he said, that the pioneers of reform are often treated as criminals; but their speech and thought live on. Imprisonment cannot crush a truth. "It may hinder it for a moment, it may delay it for an hour; but it gets an electric elasticity inside the dungeon walls, and it grows and moves the world when it comes out."<sup>143</sup>

It was a remarkable session in more than one way. The leaders of two great parties, Gokhale and Tilak, spoke from the Congress platform for the first time. The Congress demands became more emphatic; and Pundit Dhar showed his impatience with the mock legislatures of his day. "The chief plank of the Congress platform is the elective principle, and we are not going to be satisfied with a thing that will be a snare, a mockery, and a delusion, leading men to believe that they have something which they do not possess. What we want is not sham, but reality; not shadow, but substance; not nomination which is another name for deception, but representation, which is the essence of political reform."<sup>144</sup>

In 1895, Pundit Malaviya asked the people of Great Britain to realise the tremendous load of responsibility which they had to shoulder in being ultimately behind the Government of India in its shameful neglect of India's best interests. "We charge the Government of England with having saddled us with an unnecessarily costly expenditure on the Civil Service of India, we charge them with having forced upon us a crushingly heavy military expenditure; we charge them with indulging in a great waste of India's money beyond the borders of India; we charge them with want of fairness in their dealings with India in the matter of the home charges; nay, more, we charge them—the Government of India, the Government of England, and the people of England with

them – with being responsible by reason of their neglect to adequately perform their duty towards India, for the loss of millions of lives which are lost in every decade from starvation, largely the result of over-taxation and inefficient administration. We charge the people of England, because as someone has said,

‘Hear him, ye senates, hear this truth sublime;  
He who allows the oppression shares the crime,”<sup>145</sup>

#### 4. Objections answered.

The objection often raised against the Congress demand that the Congress, after all, represented only a portion of the intellectual classes only, and that the masses looked very naturally to the British for the protection of their best interests, called forth stern rejoinders from the Indian Liberals. The educated classes, said Gokhale, were in the present circumstances of India, the natural representatives of the people. They controlled and directed the Vernacular Press which could not fail to reach the masses of the people; and in a hundred other ways they had access to the mind of the people. It was only a question of time. What the educated man thought to-day, the rest of India would think to-morrow.<sup>146</sup> How could foreign officials, asked Bannerjee, who spoke their language imperfectly if at all, and who lived in a position of detachment and isolation from them, represent the masses better than the Indian intellectuals? It was also ridiculous to suggest that the interests of the masses would not be looked after by the intellectual classes. “Now let me ask,” he said, “who are the people who advocated primary education in season and out of season, pressed the claims of sanitation, abolition of the salt tax, the reform of the police, the separation of judicial and executive functions, all intended to benefit the masses? The responsibility of pursuing a policy of obstruction in regard to these matters must rest upon the shoulders of the bureaucracy who aspire to be the guardians of the interests of the masses”<sup>147</sup>

## 256 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

The officials did not realise that their contention condemned their rule out of their own mouths. It meant that so long as the people of India were kept in ignorance, they accepted the present system of administration. The moment they were educated, they ceased to be loyal supporters of the present régime.

It was true that the masses were steeped in illiteracy and were not fully alive to the responsibilities of their situation. But look at England of the forties of the nineteenth century. Half of her male population and three-fourths of the female population were unable to sign their names on their marriage register. Still the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed. The prevalent illiteracy, therefore, could not be quoted as a ground for stopping India's advance. Education sharpened the intelligence, but it could not be the indispensable condition for the organization of a National Government. The Hindus were not lacking in education; but they fell an easy prey to superior Islamic national solidarity. Was not the Magna Charta wrested, asked Mr. Muzumdar in 1918, from a despotic king by a band of uneducated barons who could sign their names only by scrolls and marks ?<sup>118</sup>

It was further said that it was difficult to secure proper representation in a country so wide and diversified as India. Here, again, the example of England might be cited with advantage. Prior to 1832, 70 members were returned by 35 places, which had no electors; 90 members were returned by 46 places with less than 50 electors; and 37 members were elected by 19 places having not more than 100 electors; while Leeds, Birmingham and Manchester were unrepresented; seats were openly sold and bought. Corruption was rampant. If then England could start the electoral experiment in such anomalous ways and develop it gradually to greater and greater perfection, what was there to prevent India from working out her representative system in her own way ?<sup>149</sup>

Nor would it do to emphasise too much the religious differences. Here, also, the Congress President (1915) drew largely

upon British history to make out his case. Religious differences, he pointed out, carried a more galling sense of social and political disadvantage than they had ever done in India. Everyone knew of the disabilities of the Roman Catholics and the Dissenters. In 1880, an influential deputation waited on Gladstone to protest against the appointment of Lord Ripon as Viceroy, because he was a Roman Catholic. The whole question of Irish Home Rule was a question of religion, of the Protestant against the Roman Catholic. In India, the Hindus and the Muslims had lived in harmony "until it was found that their differences might be turned to their mutual disadvantage"<sup>150</sup>

Nor was it proper to urge the existence of castes among the Hindus as an insuperable obstacle to the working of representative institutions in India. There was, we were told, the danger of the Brahmin monopoly of all political power. Now, to this it might be replied that the educated Brahmins, like the other educated Indians, were generally opposed to caste pretensions. Secondly, it was no use condemning outright a class which included such illustrious names as Ranade, Gokhale, Surendranath Bannerjee and others. Thirdly, a good many first class politicians have been recruited from classes other than Brahmins. Mr. Sinha pointed out further that "ill-mannered and ill-informed attacks on a whole class held in respect and even reverence by large masses of the people of India will inevitably provoke reprisals which will seriously hamper all efforts for either political or social reform."<sup>151</sup> The Hon. Mr. Basu suggested that the caste system was thoroughly democratic within itself, that its rigidity was disappearing, that the spectacle of the more enlightened ruling the less enlightened in the same community was as old as the world, and that even the House of Commons, till 1832, was politically in the hands of the English aristocracy and the upper middle classes. Take the case of Italy or Japan in 1860. "Italy in 1860 was more divided in tradition, sentiment, and feeling than India is to day or was at any time in its past history. Conflict between temporal and spiritual powers,



rivalry of cities and states, of republics and kingdoms, mutual jealousy and mutual hatred, the domination and intrigue of a powerful neighbour, these were the difficulties which stood in the way of Italy, since united under one Government"<sup>152</sup>

The caste spirit was certainly a baneful thing, but we must not exaggerate its effects. It imposed only social restrictions and no political disabilities. It had its redeeming features also; and above all, it was slowly giving way to the pressure of a new environment. All these differences, religious or racial, were present everywhere, but they were fast disappearing. It was not for the Government to bring forward these as pretexts for the endless perpetuation of their rule or to exaggerate their importance. "A nationality is now no longer either a religious or a social federation, but a political unit. Diverse races professing different forms of religion and following distinct varieties of manners, customs, and traditions easily submit to a common political faith to work out their common destiny. The Picts and the Scots, the Saxons and the Normans, the Protestants and the Catholics are now all welded into the great British nation."<sup>153</sup>

The whole question, then, was: is India a nation? It was difficult to give a categorical reply to this question. It was said that "there is no Indian Nation; there can be no Indian National Congress; there is no Indian people; there are only two hundred millions of diverse races and diverse creeds."<sup>154</sup> The Congress movement itself was a great attempt to weld together all the heterogeneous elements of the Indian society into one political whole. In the second Congress, Dr. R. Mitra said: "It has been the dream of my life that the scattered units of my race may some day coalesce and come together; that instead of living merely as individuals, we may some day so combine as to be able to live as a nation. In this meeting, I behold the commencement of such a coalescence. It is highly gratifying to me that we are here assembled together, delegates from the North and from the South, from the East and from the West...Diverse we are in origin, in religion, in language, and in

our manners, but we are none the less members of the same nation. We live in the same country, we are subjects of the same sovereign and our good and evil depend entirely on the state of the government and the laws passed in this country. Whatever is beneficial to the Hindus is equally beneficial to the Mahomedans and whatever is injurious to the Hindus is equally injurious to the followers of Mahomed. Nations are not made of sects but of tribes bound together in one political bond. We are all bound by the same political bond, and, therefore, we constitute one nation."<sup>155</sup> The President of the third National Congress continued in the same strain. "Where but a few brief decades ago, ignorance alike of the rights and duties of citizens had reigned supreme, there a keen and growing appreciation of both had been substituted. The mutual hatred and scorn of rival creeds and clans which rendered all contact but as enemies impossible, had been replaced by tolerance, a willingness to co-operate and a growing sense of brotherhood. An exclusive devotion to family interests had been tempered by public spirit and a wide sense of duty; and through the fading mists of local and sectarian prejudices, the outline of a new born nationality has become clearly distinguishable."<sup>156</sup>

The Congress leaders, in fact, were feeling the stirrings of a new consciousness. They dreamt of an Indian nationality more as an ideal in the process of realisation than as a fact already accomplished. "That is undoubtedly the noble ideal—the national ideal that we have before us, the realisation of which will be the political kingdom of Heaven. The various races, sects, and creeds of India will blend together into one imperial whole in which privileges, and rights will be obtained and enjoyed, not by one sect or creed, but by all."<sup>157</sup>

The political horizon of the educated citizen, said a speaker in 1894, "is no longer his village, or district, not even the capital city of his province, but it is now the whole Indian Continent."<sup>158</sup> In 1895, the chairman of the Reception Committee, in the same way, took his stand on the prevalence of a common

## 260 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

administration, but looked forward to the gradual realisation of the genuine national ideal to the process of time. "All the elements which go to make a common united nation are now present with us—a common political citizenship, a common loyalty to the Queen Empress, a community of interests, under the influence of which it can prosper or suffer without the whole sharing in the prosperity or misfortune and a common language or literature which binds us morally and spiritually together and connects us with the wider world outside. Difference of race and creed there still exist, but they are getting more and more tolerant of each other, less and less angular every day, and it is the function of the Indian National Congress, its chief and most glorious function, to induce in all the electric current of enlightenment which will hasten the union and make it strong to bear the strain which time may place upon it. The watchword of the Congress is Indians first; Hindoos, Mahomedans, Parsees, Christians, Punjabees, Mahrattas, Bengalees, and Madrasies afterwards, and it is for us by the moderation and business-like character of our deliberations, by the mutual tolerance of each other's feelings and prejudices to justify in act and word the hopes and aspirations of those who, in the near future, seek to realise the dream of a united and federated India, resting secure in its loyal dependence on the great British Nation and able to lead the Nations of Asia in the path of progressive advancement in all directions of human activity."<sup>159</sup>

The nationalist idea, in fact, was born; and its further development depended largely upon the spread of political education among all classes of Indian society. If the masses were dumb and inarticulate, it was because they were not yet trained in the great principles of democratic life. The Congress asked for constitutional advance and received the reply that the masses were silent and apathetic, ignorant and illiterate. The Congress asked for universal compulsory elementary education and it was told that the time has not yet arrived. Surely, this looked like "Heads I win, tails you lose."<sup>160</sup> But the Indian Liberals hoped that with

the advance of education the whole outlook of the masses would change and age-long superstitions and ignorance and prejudice which blocked the path to any progress would melt away. "Education," said the Hon. Mr. Basu, "is the bed-rock on which we must lay the foundations of our national life. To it alone I look for the removal of those galling distinctions resulting from the institution of caste, of those petty misunderstandings which mar the beauty and serenity of our religious life." <sup>161</sup>

The argument that the genius of the East was peculiarly adapted to forms of despotic rule and was a stranger to free institutions and, therefore, not only unprepared but incapable of being prepared for a political democracy was disposed of by Congress spokesmen, by an appeal to the golden past of India. Pundit Dhar, at the third Congress, quoted from a speech of Sir John Lawrence (1864), who said: "The people of India are quite capable of administering their own affairs and the municipal feeling is deeply rooted in them. The village communities, each of which is a little republic, are the most abiding of Indian institutions. Holding the position we do in India, every view of duty and policy should induce us to leave as much as possible of the business of the country to be done by the people."<sup>162</sup> Replying to the declaration of Lord Curzon that by our environment we were unequal to the responsibilities of high offices, Surendranath Bannerjee said, in 1904, "In your name and on your behalf, gentlemen, I desire to record my most emphatic protest against this assumption of our racial inferiority. Are Asiatics inferior to Europeans? Let Japan answer. Are Indians inferior to Europeans? Let George Hamilton answer and L. George Hamilton is not a friend of the people of this country. Gentlemen, are we the representatives of an inferior race, we, who are the descendants of those who in the modern world, while all Europe was steeped in superstition, held aloft the torch of civilization?" <sup>163</sup>

The Congress politicians generally avoided references to past history to prove their case; for they thought they were

on surer ground when they appealed to facts of contemporary history. The Hon. Mr. Mazumdar, in his Presidential Speech (1916), took his stand on the record of Indians in high offices under the Native States as well as the British Government. The Native States were entirely managed by Indian administrators and some of them were marching ahead of British India in certain directions. Thus, Dr. Sunderland writes : " A further answer to the assertion that India cannot govern herself—surely one that shall be conclusive—is the fact that in parts she is governing herself now, and governing herself well. It is notorious that very best Government in India to day is not that carried on by the British, but that of several of the Native States, notably Baroda and Mysore. In these States, particularly Baroda, the people are more free, more prosperous, more contented, and are making more progress than in any other part of India. Note the superiority of both these States in the important matter of popular education. Mysore is spending in education more than three times as much per capita than in British India, while Baroda has made her education free and compulsory. Both of these States, but specially Baroda, which has thus placed herself in line with the leading nations of Europe and America by making provision for the education of all her children, may well be contrasted with British India, which provides education even for the poorest kind, for only one boy in ten and one girl in one hundred and forty-four."<sup>164</sup> Men like Sir Salar Jung, Sir Dinkar. Rao, Sir T. Madhav Rao, Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao, Sir Vishveshwaraya, Sir Prabhashankar Patani and Sir V. T. Krishnamachariar have shown consummate ability in the highest administrative offices. Sir S. P. Sinha and Sir Syed Ali Imam were not unworthy successors of Sir James Stephen or Sir C. P. Ilbert. In fact, Indians have given an excellent account of themselves as members of Executive Councils, as Presidents of Assemblies, as Vice-Chancellors of Universities and as Chief Justices in High Courts. If they have not done more, "it is their misfortune, not their fault."

It was true that self-government implied the capacity for

self-defence and India might not be quite prepared to organize her own military, naval, and aerial defences all at once. But it was here that the necessity for self-government made itself specially felt. India certainly did not lack martial spirit or martial capacity. What India had been persistently asking for was more opportunities for training and exercise of the latent talents of India in this as well as every other sphere. Military unfitness of India was not congenital. It was the outcome of a definite policy of distrust pursued in the past. An ignorant, mercenary army cannot be a source of the same strength as a truly national army. The Arms Act, with its galling sense of racial inferiority and its overt imputation of universal disloyalty<sup>165</sup> must go, and the beginning of a National Army in India should be made at once.

#### 5. The case for Self-government.

For the Moderates this demand, like every other demand, was based on considerations of both patriotism and loyalty. Their fundamental axiom was that what was good for India was good for the Empire and what was good for the Empire was good for India. They asked for the right of self-defence; they asked for the right of self-government, not merely in the interests of India, but always equally in the interests of the Empire. They never imagined, they never wanted to imagine, India except as an integral part of the Empire. They offered unstinted loyalty; they asked for unlimited trust. To them the Empire was not a cruel necessity, an arbitrary infliction; but a god-sent institution meant for the development of the best interests of India. They stood primarily for India and not for the Empire; but to them Indian interests unmistakably pointed in the direction of the Empire. They wanted India to be strong and vigorous and self-reliant and prosperous because both India's development demanded it and the Empire's development implied it. The ultimate foundation of the strength and prosperity of India and the Empire were according to them the same. As Mr. Asquith says, "The Empire rests not upon the predominance,

artificial and superficial, of race or class, but upon the loyal affections of free communities, built upon the basis of equal rights."<sup>166</sup>

"I say," said Bannerjee (1916), "we want self-government in the interests of the Empire. Who knows what will happen twenty years hence? Is it not the duty of statesmanship to be forewarned and forearmed, to take the necessary measures of precaution against a contingency of this kind? We are as multitudinous as the stars in the heavens. Marshman says that the grandsons of those who fought against Babar became under Akbar, governors of provinces, ministers of the Councils, etc. Let that trust be reposed in us and then England may view with serenity the mightiest combination that might be formed. Self-government is the cement of the Empire. It has knit together the self-governing colonies of the Empire. It has converted hostile Boers into loyal citizens, shedding their blood for the purpose of suppressing a revolution of their countrymen against the Empire."<sup>167</sup>

The Indian Liberals based their case to a great extent upon the charters and proclamations and promises issued from time to time by the authorities in Great Britain. There was a time when Indians did not fully understand what their position in the Empire was, but even in those days, when political consciousness was not born, liberal British statesmanship declared in no unequivocal terms the ideal of British rule in India. The principle of equality in the Commonwealth was implicit in the Charter of 1833 and above all in the Proclamation of 1858. Dadabhai Naoroji called it the Magna Charta of our liberties. "In it are embodied the germs of all we aim at now, of all that we can desire hereafter (1886). Our case was complete; all that we had to ask was the translation into literal fact the promise of the Proclamation". In 1905, after twenty years, the Grand Old Man of India returned again to the same Proclamation and demanded the redemption of the pledges contained therein. What position, he asked, did the Indians hold in the Empire?

They were, he answered, British subjects and were entitled to claim all British citizens' rights. In the charter granting territorial rights to the East India Company, when Bombay was acquired, we read: "And it is declared that all persons being His Majesty's subjects inhabiting within the said island, and their children and their posterity born within the limits thereof, shall be deemed free denizens and natural subjects, as if living and born in England."<sup>169</sup> All the terms of this first grant were extended in it to all future British territorial acquisitions. Hence, every British Indian subject was entitled to vote and even to become a Member of Parliament in England. Next, in the Queen's Proclamation we read: "We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to our other subjects, and these obligations by the blessing of Almighty God we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil."<sup>170</sup> The Queen Empress wired to Lord Lytton that all, from the highest to the humblest, "may feel that under our rule the great principles of liberty, equality and justice are secured to them."<sup>171</sup> On the basis of this, the patriarch of Indian politics demanded that "just as the administration of the United Kingdom in all services, departments and details is in the hands of the peoples themselves of that country, so should we in India claim that the administration in all services, departments, and details should be in the hands of the people themselves of India."<sup>172</sup>

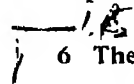
But above all, the case for self-government rested upon the new spirit that was born in India and that was demanding self-expression, both for its own sake as well as for the sake of the broader world. In India, we had neither good government nor self-government, because self-government was the only guarantee of good government. But even if we granted that there was an efficient system of government, could it ever be a substitute for self-government? In the years following 1905, even the Liberal politicians were becoming more and more outspoken as regards the fundamental needs of India. Here is an Englishman's confession of his faith in a well-known



British periodical. "Every Englishman is aware that, on no account, not if he were to be governed by an angel from heaven, would he surrender that most sacred of all his rights, the right of making his own laws ... He would not be an Englishman, he would not be able to look English fields and trees in the face, if he had parted with that right. There have been beneficent despots and wise law-givers in all ages who have increased the prosperity and probably the contentment and happiness of their subjects, but yet their government has not stimulated the moral and intellectual capacity latent in citizenship or fortified its character or enlarged its understanding. There is more hope for the future of mankind in the least and faintest impulse towards self-help, self-realisation, self-redemption than in all the laws that Aristotle ever dreamt of."<sup>173</sup> Sir S. P. Sinha drew from this the inference that what was true of Englishmen is also true of Indians. If an Englishman found it impossible to swallow the domination of others, even when it spelt efficient and better government, there was no reason why it should be reserved for Indians to accept passively the blessings of a good government dolled out to them by a paternal alien government. The ideal of self-government was implicit in English character, English tradition, English literature, English political philosophy, English declarations and charters. It was the ideal for which the newly awakened mind of Young India now began to pant

What was the meaning of this yearning? The highest ground upon which the case of Liberty for India rested was the inner necessity which the Indian mind began to experience for giving its full expression to its own genius, in its own way, in the broader life of humanity. How could the great Indian nation for ever reconcile its self-respect with its position of permanent political tutelage? If Indian character were not to be stifled and dwarfed, it must be allowed full autonomy in the political sphere. The Indian nation, therefore, now found it difficult to be treated as an eternal baby. It was becoming more self-conscious; it was throbbing with new life. This, then, was the meaning of this new cry. It was the

desire to be oneself, to play one's own part, to make one's own contribution in one's own way. Said Bannerjee, in 1916, "We want self-government finally for the highest ends of national system, for the moral elevation of our people. Political inferiority involves moral degradation. It is galling to our self-respect. The mind and the conscience of a free man are not the mind and the conscience of a slave. A nation of slaves would never have produced a Patanjali, a Buddha, or a Valmiki. We want self-government in order that we might wipe off from us the badge of political inferiority and lift our heads among the nations of the earth and fulfil the great destinies that are in store for us under the blessings of Divine Providence. We want self-government not only for our own interests but for the sake of humanity at large...Our mission may be fulfilled so that Europe may be rescued from gross materialism, from the degraded culture which at the present moment have heaped the battlefields of Europe with hecatombs of dead. But we cannot fulfil that mission unless and until we ourselves are emancipated, we ourselves are free...Our campaign of self-government is not a political one. It is a religious and moral mission in which the fate and destinies of humanity are involved. Such are the ideals, the aspirations that inspire us to-day." 174



#### 6 The Swaraj within the Empire.

The Indian Liberals, with their characteristic caution, avoided for a long time the task of clearly formulating to themselves the goal of all their political strivings. But since 1905, the colour of Indian politics had changed beyond recognition: and the Moderates realised that unless they coped with the requirements of the times, they would be swept away. The question of ideal appeared to some as unnecessary and academic, while it appeared mischievous to others. Sinha, however, felt, in 1915, "that the positive danger in the path of the future well-being of the country is the want of a reasoned ideal of our future as would satisfy the aspirations and ambitions of the rising generations of India, and at the same time meet with the approval of those to whose hands our destinies are committed. It is my belief that

a rational and inspiring ideal will arrest the insidious and corrupting influence of the real enemies of our motherland . ...It must be obvious to all sincere and impartial judges that no mandate, whether of the Government or of the Congress, will be able to still the throbbing pain in the soul of awakening India, unless the ideal which is held up by the Congress and accepted by the Government commends itself first to the heart and then to the head."<sup>175</sup> Here, we see, for the first time, clearly enunciated, the necessity of a well-defined objective in Congress politics. The Liberals felt that the other parties carried all before them because they were bolder and clearer in the enunciation of their goal. The ideal must be, however, such as to appeal not only to the heart but also to the head. It must be, in other words, not only emotionally inspiring, but also intellectually acceptable. In order to satisfy this double test, it must be one which both the Government and the people would willingly and enthusiastically accept. Sinha, however, could not or would not define self-government except in terms of President Lincoln as "government of the people, for the people, and *by the people*." The administration of the country was, in fact, a government of the people, it was thought to be, by one school, a government for the people, but it was not a government by the people. The ideal of good government, thus, gave way to the ideal of self-government.

But the Moderates became now more emphatic than ever about (a) the indispensability and desirability of the British-connection and (b) the attainment of the ideal by peaceful constitutional methods. Taking the second condition first, Sinha laid down three ways of attaining self-government : (1) by way of a free gift from the British nation; (2) by wresting it from them; and (3) by means of such progressive improvement of our mental, moral, and material condition, as would, on the one hand, render us worthy of it, and, on the other, make it impossible for our rulers to withhold it. A free gift of self-government to India was not possible; the English Government would not part with their most cherished dependency in such a cavalier fashion. Se-

condly, it would not be worth having, because we must grow into freedom and not merely get it. Nothing was so bad in political institutions as prematurity. Thirdly, India freed in this way was not real India restored. There was no absolute isolation possible for India and she would be plunged soon in the thick of another struggle of nations.

The second alternative appealed to extremist minds. A serious conflict with the British Power was impossible, if not inconceivable.

The third alternative, then, was the only feasible one. The moment we were really able to manage our own internal affairs peacefully and prevent external aggression, it would be in the interest as it would be the duty of England to concede the fullest autonomy to India. It was idle to object that history did not record any such peaceful transfer of power from one country to another. But the situation in India was without a parallel. For India there was only one goal and only one path. "Has there been a nation whose ideas of political morality have ever reached those of the great English nation? Has there been any other nation which has fought so continuously and strenuously for the freedom and liberty of other nations as the English? My faith is based not on emotion, not on unreasoning sentiment, it rests on the records of what has already been achieved by the undying labours of far-sighted English statesmen and noble-hearted Indian patriots, both those who are still working for the cause and those whose labours are done and whose spirits hover over us to-day to guide and to inspire us"<sup>176</sup>

This seemed like playing into the hands of the Government; but the Moderates pointed out that it was not so. This doctrine of preparatory fitness for Swaraj was shared by almost all schools of Indian politics: but each one interpreted it in its own way. The Indian Liberals made it clear that they did not share the views of those who would for ever postpone the advent of self-

government on the ground of unpreparedness. Gokhale quoted Gladstone and laid down that "it is liberty alone which fits men for liberty." This proposition, like every other in politics, had its bounds; but it was far safer than the counter-doctrine, "wait till they are fit."<sup>177</sup> Macaulay also had said that if men were not fit to get into water till they knew how to swim, they would never go into water at all, or learn how to swim. The Government persisted in saying always "not yet." The Indian Liberal rejoined – "when?" Mr. Muzumdar quoted Edwin Bevan's parable of the "Patient and the Steel Frame" and warned us that the patient in the "steel frame" required a gradual relaxation and occasional readjustment of his splints and bandages, and above all, it was the food and nourishment, and not the splint and bandages, which were calculated to give him strength and cure him of his injuries. Could one expect a man to be an expert jockey without training him on the back of a horse, any more than one could expect a man to be an expert swimmer without allowing him to go into the water? Efficiency could not be attained without repeated falls and duckings. "Admitting for argument's sake – and there can be no prejudice in such an admission – that the Indians are not as fit for self-government as the Europeans are, does it follow that they must only patiently contemplate in their steel frame without a stir till the day of their final release? If that be so, the day of their redemption will, in all probability, maintain its ever-receding distance, and the vision of the patient never realised. There is a school for the lawyer, the physician, the educationist, and the engineer, where he can obtain his passport and begin his profession; but is there any school or college where an aspirant can attain to his degree for self-government? It is through self-government that the art of self-government can be either taught or acquired."<sup>178</sup>

Still, the Indian Liberals maintained that the goal was not yet. It was not so distant, we were reminded by Sinha, as to render it a mere vision of the imagination. It was not so near that we had merely to stretch our hands to grasp the coveted prize. There was no royal road to the goal; what was required was

a patient, persistent, strenuous co-operation in all measures necessary for that purpose. The spirit of mutual trust and toleration between the Government and the people was absolutely necessary. The ground for self-government could be prepared only by an ever-increasing direct participation of the people's best representatives in the legislation as well as administration, civil as well as military, executive as well as judicial work of the Government. The bid for office should not be run down as a bid for loaves and fishes, honours and emoluments. Some of the great Liberals, like Telang and Tyabji, had accepted high office only at considerable sacrifice. They intended to take part in the work of the Government not as tools and agents but as members of the Government itself. The more Indians were able to share the responsible work in the administration, the more they would secure the identification of the people with the Government. It was perfectly true that we were yet a long way off from free institutions, that there had been no concession of real power to the people so far. But the privileges already acquired, if used with industry, moderation, and tact, would surely enable us to press for further expansion and still further expansion till we attained our goal "not by any sudden or revolutionary change, but by gradual evolution and cautious progress."<sup>179</sup>

The second condition was equally vital. The self-government here alluded to always meant self-government within the Empire. The alternative ideal in the field was separation from England and absolute independence. This ideal, like the other one of violent and revolutionary change, appealed irresistibly to impatient youth—whose privilege it is to be fancy free. But we must be practical and face the issue boldly and squarely. Who desired or supported a separation, asked Basu, as the President of the 1914 Congress. The Indian princes, secure in their dignity and status; the Indian aristocracy, safe in its possessions and influence; the Indian middle classes, free in their vocations; the toiling masses, sure of the fruit of their labour, were all moving onwards to one common goal with the impetus which a central Government, a

common vehicle of thought, common ideals, and a growing sense of unity and nationality have given to them. Would they support this separation and lose sight of their goal altogether? India, high or low, had published her answer to the world. It was but a dream and might come, as dreams do come, when the senses were held in the bond of sleep, or as they came in the impetuous days of youth when the senses lacked the control of wisdom which came with age. But when one took the idea firmly into his grasp, it broke into the dust of the past, bringing no solace but disappointment and sorrow.<sup>180</sup>

Autonomy within the Empire was, therefore, the accepted political faith of the Liberals. It avoided extremes—the Scylla of separation on the one hand and the Charybdis of subordination on the other. The ideal was that of co-ordination and comradeship, of a joint partnership on equal terms. It was too early in the day to define in concrete terms the precise form which this partnership might assume. But there was no reason why the highest patriotism could be reconciled to the ideal of a commonwealth in which “all will find a place—the Englishman as well as the Indian, the prince as well as the peasant, and all communities, by a judicious combination, of the methods of election and selection in the case of the less advanced.”<sup>181</sup> It would be a “common and splendid heritage all of us bringing our special talents to bear co-operatively for the common good of the whole.”<sup>182</sup>

The Liberal cried: Is not this ideal sufficiently inspiring for the most ardent patriotic imagination of our youth? Patriotism of the purest type is the need of the hour. There are patriotisms and patriotisms; the appeal of the Liberal is not to that ‘morbid sentiment which rises like a rocket and falls like a stone, not that sentiment which takes a man off his feet and lands him in disasters; not that sentiment which panders to passion and does not appeal to reason; but that supreme virtue which enlightens the head and ennobles the heart, and under the heavenly inspiration of which a man forgets his self and merges his individuality like a drop in an ocean, in the vast all absorbing interest of his

country, feeding only on self-sacrifice and growing on what it feeds."<sup>183</sup> Our country must be our religion; and her welfare our common faith. Nations are not born, but made. They must grow from within.

‘What avail your wealth, your learning,  
Empty titles, sordid trade ?

True self-rule were worth them all !

Nations by themselves are made.’ ”<sup>184</sup>

### 7. The Liberal Ideals.

It is one thing to define one's fundamental political ideals; but it is quite a distinct thing to insist upon their immediate translation into practice. The Congress Liberals laid down certain ideals which enabled them to examine and judge the existing political and administrative institutions in their light. The root of their political and economic thinking was a faith that there was such a thing as India, that it was not a mere geographical expression, that it was made up of peoples, different though they may be in religion or caste, or race or culture, having a common economic and political destiny, that these peoples were more and more becoming conscious of a common national self, and that only a truly representative body like the Congress was the fit spokesman of the common longings and aspirations. The ideal of good government is no new ideal in India; but for a body constituted as the Congress was and is, a body apart from and independent of the Government, a body made up of people's representatives, to assume the rôle of an impartial and discerning critic of the administrative system and its day-to-day working was certainly a new and revolutionary thing in the history of modern India. The Congress Liberals, therefore, brought to bear upon the existing system the light of modern criticism and insisted upon suitable changes in its machinery and working. Secondly, the democratic ideal of bringing the government more and more into harmony with the people's aspirations and interests was always



kept steadily in view; and the existing institutions were considered adequate or inadequate also from this new point of view. Thirdly, the ideal of progressive Government was always there requiring the whole system to be brought into line with modern social and political ideas. Fourthly, the ideal of a new and growing Indian nationalism to a very great extent dominated the Congress thinking and demanded radical reconstruction, social and political, of a type calculated to help the Indian people as a whole towards the fulfilment of their national destiny. Fifthly, the ideals of British Liberalism naturally had a very decisive sway on the minds of those students of Bright and Gladstone and Macaulay. These standpoints are seen more or less to interact and to give a general pull in the same direction, but they may be distinguished and their distinct influence may be to some extent perceived and traced in the Congress literature of criticism and suggestion.

#### 8. The Limitations of the Existing System.

We may summarise, in the words of Gokhale, the specific limitations of the whole machinery of administration from the point of view of the Congress. Gokhale made two important points: (1) the existing system was autocratic and irresponsible; and (2) there was no provision anywhere for a body capable of giving a sound direction to Indian policy in Indian interests. (1) There was no effective safeguard against the vagaries of administration. The buffer of the Company's Government, which fairly protected Indian interests was gone; and there was no effectual substitute; (2) there were no effectual safeguards against the misapplication of Indian revenues for extra-Indian requirements; (3) the control vested in the Council of the Secretary of State under the statute of 1858 was rendered almost nugatory by the alteration of its status under recent Amending Acts; (4) the control of Parliament, as against the Secretary of State, had become almost nominal, because the latter was a member of the Cabinet, with a standing majority behind him. The old periodical en-

quiries by Parliament into the working of the Indian administration were gone: India being a non-party question, the responsible Opposition in Parliament left it alone; (5) there was no salutary check of public opinion, either in India or in England on the financial administration of India: Parliament was ill-informed and indifferent; the supreme and provincial legislatures had no power to control expenditure.<sup>185</sup>

So much about the absence of checks upon maladministration. But more important than that was the fact that the existing system of administration favoured largely a policy of mere drift. The actual work of administration was carried out by the Civil Service,—but individually members of that service could not command the prestige which was so essential for inaugurating any large scheme of policy involving a departure from the established order of things. The administrators who came out direct from England had the necessary prestige; but they were mere birds of passage, their stay in India being limited to five years. These men had not, therefore, the will or the opportunity to deal in an effective manner with the larger problems of the administration. There was, thus, an inveterate tendency merely to keep things going. "What the situation really demands is that a large and comprehensive scheme for the moral and material well-being of the people should be chalked out with patient care and foresight, and then it should be firmly and steadily adhered to, and the progress made examined almost from year to year."<sup>186</sup>

#### 9. Morley-Minto Reforms.

The Congress agitation for revision of the constitution is seen to develop *pari passu* with the actual statutory changes in the Indian Constitution from time to time. Thus, we have a few well-marked stages: (1) movement before 1892; (2) movement from 1892 to 1909; and (3) movement from 1909 to 1917. The fourth stage is from 1919 to 1929 and after.

The real constitutional fight, however, centred round the Legislative Councils in India. The Congress stood boldly for the principle of election and commenced from the very start a vigorous campaign for making these Councils more and more representative of public opinion.

The very first Congress demanded that "the supreme and existing local legislative councils should be expanded by the admission of a considerable proportion of elected members; that all Budgets should be referred to the councils and that the right of interpellation be granted."<sup>187</sup> In 1904, a resolution was passed in favour of direct representation to the House of Commons, the right to divide the House on financial matters in Indian legislation, the right to be represented by Indians in the India Council and the Executive Councils in India. In 1905, the Congress desired that the system of Government obtaining in the self-governing Dominions, or Colonies, as they were still called, should be gradually introduced into India, and asked for a fuller representation of the people on the Councils and greater control over the financial and executive administration of the country.

The Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 were the first serious response to the persistent constitutional demands of the Congress. The Congress passed the following resolution on it: "That this Congress, while gratefully appreciating the earnest and arduous endeavours of Lord Morley and Lord Minto in extending to the people of the country a fairly liberal measure of constitutional reforms, as now embodied in the India Councils Act of 1909, noted that the regulations had caused widespread dissatisfaction throughout the country by reason of:—

- (a) the excessive and unfairly preponderant share of representation given to the followers of one particular religion;
- (b) the unjust, invidious, and humiliating distinctions made between Muslim and non-Muslim subjects of His Majesty in the matter of the electorates, the franchise, and

the qualifications of candidates;

(c) the wide, arbitrary, and unreasonable disqualification and restriction for candidates seeking election to the Councils;

(d) the general distrust of the educated classes that runs through the whole course of the Regulations, and

(e) the unsatisfactory composition of the non-official majorities in the Provincial Councils, rendering them ineffective and unreal for all practical purposes." 188

Gokhale's appreciation of the reforms is thoroughly characteristic of the whole school. Important concessions were made, if not in fact, at least in principle, and further opportunities for work were placed at the disposal of the Constitutionalists. These opportunities should be utilised to the full for further developments. "Hitherto we have been engaged in agitation from outside. From now we shall be engaged in what might be called responsible association in administration. There is plenty of scope for growth here; and as we grow and discharge the responsibilities that devolve on us properly, I am sure there will be progress further and further towards our having what may be called responsible administration. Now, these are large and generous concessions and must receive at our hands the response which they require. They impose upon us two responsibilities in particular. The first is that a spirit of co-operation with the Government must be now evoked amongst us, instead of mere criticism of Government... The second is that the new power should be exercised with moderation and with restraint and that they should be used solely for the promotion of the interests of the masses of the people...

"Let us, therefore, not go in pursuit of mere idle dreams and neglect the opportunities which the present offers us...None of us wants to be satisfied with things as they are. But first we must prove that we can bear these responsibilities before we can ask for any more.

"I have often said that I do not want any limits, any res-

trictions, on the growth which should be open to our people...I want the people of our country, men and women, to be able to rise to the full height of their stature, as men and women of other countries do. But our growth can only be through the discharge of responsibilities; they must first be discharged before we can think of further responsibilities."<sup>189</sup> In these words which sum up the attitude of the Liberals towards reforms, the leader of the Liberal Party recommended the new regulations to his countrymen.

#### 10. Communal Electorates.

There were two problems over which the Liberals continued to be specially bitter during the years that followed the Morley-Minto Reforms. The one was the problem of communal electorates and the other was the problem of freedom of press and speech. The communal principle accepted by the Morley-Minto Reforms gave a very serious shock to the Liberals' faith in the British Government. Pundit Dhar, in 1911, as President of the Congress, examined the whole position. It was true that India was unfortunately split up into many communities, each of which was entitled to its proper share of representation. There could be no objection to securing adequate representation to every important community by a general electorate, but a communal electorate was a different matter. The non-communal electorate was a unifying agency which enabled men of each community to co-operate with those of others in the common interests of the whole country; a communal electorate was a disintegrating agency by which sectional interests tended to claim the first regard of every community. The Hindus felt that they were badly let down by the new scheme. The argument of 'political importance' of the Mahomedans was beyond the pale of rational discussion. Thus, the Hindu mind became very much embittered and the seeds of further division were sown. The separatist spirit would thus gradually pervade the whole Indian system from top to bottom and "all hopes of building up an

Indian nationality must be abandoned for many generations to come."<sup>190</sup>

The most important thing, insisted the Liberal, was the effect of separation and class privileges upon Indian national character. In every civilised country, knowledge, property, and numbers were considered the measure of political fitness; but in India, henceforth, the reverse would be the case. Caste, or religion, became the basis of fitness or unfitness; and once the people realised that the Government had ceased to value justice and equity and had preferred to base its foundations upon the principle of political expediency and opportunism, they would lose all faith in it.<sup>191</sup> This was the calamity of which the Liberal was most afraid.

The Liberal found himself confronted by a dilemma. One article of his creed was to help the Government to the full measure of his ability in the performance of its legitimate functions. He stood for loyalty to the constitutional authority; he stood for active co-operation with its principles. But there was another article of his creed which he held even more important. The Government, after all, existed for the people, and not the people for the Government. To preserve that nation and to oppose every measure which threatened its existence was, therefore, an even more important duty. Here was a situation full of potential dangers to the best interests of India and the Empire. For long, the Liberal had quarrelled with the authorities on matters of detail which were always capable of being settled by accommodation and compromise; but now, he was fated to disagree with the Government on a point of vital importance. It was impossible for him to be loyal at once to the nationalist ideal and the imperial ideal on this point. "If they submit to separation and in a country already torn by social and sectarian differences allow those differences to be stereotyped into the permanent features of their political institutions, in view of the expediencies of the day, they sacrifice their most cherished convictions and destroy the nationalist ideal. If they resist it, they weaken the chances of their securing the good will of the Government, under which the realisa-

## 280 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

tion of their nationalist ideal is possible. For, it is clear as day that British rule in India with all its faults and failings, all the shadows resting upon its career, is yet the symbol, the pledge, the guarantee of peace and progress, knowledge and freedom; to weaken it is to weaken the cause of civilisation. This is the dilemma which confronts the thinking portion of the Indian community, and there is no escape from it as long as, on the one hand, the people are taught, in colleges and schools and by hundred other means, Western ideals of liberty and nationality, Western conceptions of State duties and the rights of individual man; while on the other, they have to live under institutions which contradict these ideas. Is it reasonable to expect a people living in the midst of these cross-currents of opposite and irreconcilable forces, to give for any length of time their moral allegiance to one set of principles and their practical allegiance to another? "192

The main contention of the Moderates against the Morley-Minto scheme was this principle of deliberate injustice done to one community with a view to prevent a united front between the two great communities of India in their fight for freedom, which it embodied. It was again and again pointed out that the Mahomedans were specially protected in those provinces even where they were in a majority, while the Hindus were ignored even where they formed minorities, that the Muslims were given representation "somewhat in excess of their numerical strength," that the Mahomedans were given excessive representation by means of their separate electorates and also the right to contest seats in the joint electorate and so on. But the Congress, above all, deplored the introduction of the principle of separation and disunion into the very heart of Indian politics. Nothing, said the President of the Congress, in 1912, "is more calculated to retard the concord and harmony between Mahomedans and Hindus, to obstruct the intellectual and political advancement of the Mahomedans themselves, and the growth of a sturdy catholic public spirit and life amongst them than these water-tight compartments of separate electorates." "193

It must be said to the credit of the Indian Liberals that they always stood for the one Indian nation, which at least, in their belief, stood above all sectarian and communal differences. Caste—both as a principle which divides Hindus into high and low, and as a principle which divides Hindus and Muslims into a majority community and a minority community; caste, both in the social and in the political sphere, was repudiated categorically by the Indian Liberals. They stood for a policy of progressive education, the elevation of all people, and the obliteration of lines of caste and creed in the social and political life of the country. This was the task which appealed to their patriotic imagination, and they appealed to both the Hindus and the Mahomedans to recognize the essential unity of their lives and to sink all petty differences for a common ideal. President Basu made an eloquent appeal to substitute a broad humanitarian nationalism for the narrow forms and formulae of sectarian creeds. “What does it matter if I spring from the head of the Creator or his feet? Is not the whole universe his footstool? And what does formula matter in religion? God reveals Himself to all who seek Him. Whether we hearken to the voice of the Muezzin, or to the pealing of the bells, whether the minaret or the trident attracts our gaze, whether we assemble in temples or in mosques, whether we are high or lowly born, it makes no difference; beyond these, is the sanctuary of the mother, where the voice of humanity is calling us to worship. There we stand united before her sacred altar with our feet on the past and our gaze on the future. If only we bear in mind that we are Indians first and Indians always, what does it matter whether one community advances more rapidly than another, whether one receives more favours than another? Let us bear in mind that the advancement of a part of the body politic means the progress of the whole, that favours to our brethren mean favours to us all.”<sup>194</sup> Another President simply brushed aside the whole question by asking, “What are special electorates and communal representations when there is really no electorate and no representation among a people?”<sup>195</sup>



### II. Freedom of Press, Platform, and Association.

The other problem which engaged the attention of the Liberals was the problem of freedom of expression and association. The cry of sedition was raised against the early Congressmen. The Government was not much accustomed to public criticism of the type the Congress was offering, and it felt that the Congress indulged in wild and irresponsible rhetoric, calculated to impair its own prestige. Then '*The London Times*' declared that "Congress was merely an affair of discontented place-seekers, —men of straw, with little or no stake in the country...persons of considerable imitative powers...of total ignorance of the real problems of Government...delegates from all the talking clubs...might become a serious danger to public tranquillity."

The line between legitimate criticism and illegitimate criticism is not always easy to draw. In all countries and particularly in countries like India, attacks on Government policy are liable to be misunderstood. The men whom the country calls "Moderates" to-day were looked upon in their time as "Radicals." There was a certain section of the Governmental and pro-Governmental opinion which always regarded the National Congress as a body of mischievous agitators. Mr. Eardley Norton was called "a veiled seditionist" by his friends for associating himself with the Congress. In the third Congress, he replied, "If it be sedition, gentlemen, to rebel against all wrong, if it be sedition to insist that the people should have a fair share in the administration of their own country and affairs, if it be sedition to resist tyranny, to raise my voice against oppression, to mutiny against injustice, to insist upon a hearing before a sentence, to uphold the liberties of the individual, to vindicate our common right to gradual but ever-advancing reform; if this be sedition, I am right glad to be called a 'seditionist.'" <sup>196</sup>

The Congress Report asked whether there was any wisdom in persecution. Such persecution would only drive agitation underground and convert an open, above-board, constitutional movement into a secret, underground, and unconstitutional body.

The Congress claimed the credit of having swept away all this fungoid growth and raised the level of all political agitation by working in the wholesome light of open day. Come what may, "the Congress idea has now such a hold upon the mind of the country that no earthly power can extinguish it. If ten thousand of the most prominent Congressmen were deported to-morrow, the idea would still creep on, spreading from mind to mind, till it had seized every man, woman, and child amongst the Indian population, ever growing stronger and stronger in every mind which had received the seed."<sup>197</sup> The Congress, however, persisted in its peaceful educational propaganda in the teeth of official misunderstanding and opposition.

Things, however, went on fairly smoothly till the nationalist agitation assumed a somewhat serious form after the Partition of Bengal. The Government had to launch a series of measures to control and check the wild activities of the new agitators. The Congress Liberals did not associate themselves with either the radical agitation of the new Party, or with the defensive measures of the Government. The leaders appealed to the innate good sense both of the people and of the Government. Mr. Bannerjee asked the people in the depths of their desperation not to forget the immemorial traditions of their race, or renounce the unalterable faith in the ultimate triumph of constitutional and righteous means for the attainment of national regeneration. Mr. Dhar pleaded for greater enthusiasm on the part of the Moderates and greater wisdom on the part of the Extremists in an eloquent passage. "Our agitation, in order to be effective, must be national, not sectarian; persistent, not spasmodic; directed by intelligence and wisdom, and not impulsive and reckless. Enthusiasm is good and idealism is good, and even crying for the moon is sometimes good; and I for one can sympathise with those who are called visionaries and dreamers, for I know that in every active and reforming body, there is always an extreme wing that is not without its uses in great human movements. I know that moderation sometimes means indifference and caution timidity, and I hold that India needs bold and enthusiastic characters—not men of pale hopes and

middling expectations, but courageous natures, fanatics in the cause of their country."<sup>198</sup>

The Moderates unequivocally condemned all lawlessness and disorder; but they pointed out that repression was no remedy. Repression had nowhere succeeded and it was bound to fail in India also. It had converted prison-houses into seats of martyrdom. There was a conflict between the forces of the old constitution and the new spirit. People, as Burke said, had no interest in disorder, and in all disputes between the people and the rulers, the presumption was generally in favour of the people. Revolutions were not the result of chance or popular caprice. It was impatience of suffering and not passion to rebel which inspired the populace. It was no use, therefore, trying to suppress by measures like the Press Act and the Defence of India Act, the outward symptoms of a disease without attempting its diagnosis or its cure. "Anarchism is the common enemy of mankind throughout the world. In every country and every age civilized humanity has refused to recognize the brotherhood of the secret murderer and the dastardly assassin; and none but an anarchist need defend or support an anarchist. But a general crusade against a community in the name of anarchism is justified neither by reason, nor logic, nor considerations of expediency. The rats are a recognised nuisance and for aught we know, they may be also responsible for the plague and the pestilence. But if the rats are so sly as to elude our grasp and so subtle as not to come into the cage laid for them, no man in his senses and even under the greatest provocation, should so far forget himself as to be induced to set fire to the house to get rid of these pests."<sup>199</sup>

If the Press were gagged, if men were to be punished without trial, if criticism of the Civil Service were considered treason, if want of affection were deemed disaffection, what remained of the freedom of the individual? The Executive had a right to arm itself with extraordinary powers of coercion if there were in the country a native and widespread movement of resistance to authority, and if breaches of the public peace were

frequent. So far the Liberals agreed with the Government. But was there such a state of things in the country? There might be discontent, but there was not much active disaffection. The authorities attached exaggerated importance to the utterances of a few visionaries and often represented an agitation for reform and for the removal of specific grievances as a movement of revolt. The Government might be able to prevent the wild talk of a few by such legislation; but it would drive hundreds to acute discontent and a sense of injury.

What was sedition? It was a very difficult question to answer. Gokhale distinguished three views. There were those who thought that unless an Indian spoke to them with "bated breath and whispering humbleness" he was seditious. There were others who *thought that any one who comments on the actions of the officials* or criticised the administration, or took part in political agitation, was seditious. But to those who took a large view of the situation the term 'sedition' was confined to attempts made to subvert the Government. Unless the authorities firmly restricted themselves only to the last interpretation of sedition, they would indiscriminately drive all the critics of the Government into the camp of the seditionists.

It was extremely unwise on the part of the authorities to talk of the disloyalty of the educated classes and then to suppress them. If such a state of affairs existed, the moral foundations of the Government must have gone, and no policy of repression could replace them. But the educated classes were loyal; they desired the stability of British rule from motives of enlightened self-interest. It was perfectly natural, however, that they should be dissatisfied with their own position in the country and with the existing system of administration. They were behind the great constitutional agitation set up by the Congress for political and administrative reform. The more they felt that their cry was a cry in the wilderness, the more their discontent grew. The remedy for such a state of things was clearly not wholesale repression, but a policy of wise and steady conciliation on the part

## 286 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

of the Government. A policy of indiscriminate repression would not facilitate the work of administration, would enhance the very evil which it was intended to control, and would associate the administration of the country with harsh memories which even time might not soften.<sup>200</sup>

### 12. Morley-Minto Reforms: Further Criticism.

The Congress Liberal Party felt the inadequacy of the Morley-Minto reforms more and more as time went on. The introduction of the communal principle had given the whole Indian political life a wrong direction. But in other respects also, the Reforms fell far short of the Liberal demands. The principle of representation was accepted; but it was applied in a very halting way.

(1) The representation of the middle classes had been secured by indirect elections. "For the Imperial Council, the general population has no vote whatever—Indian members of each Provincial Council themselves elected by a certain number of delegates from the local boards, including one member from the local University, return two members to the Imperial Council. The process of election of members to the Provincial Council may be broadly stated thus: a limited proportion of the general population elects a certain number of members to the municipal and district boards, to which a certain proportion of nominated members is added. The boards composed of both the elected and nominated members elect two or three delegates (except in Madras). To call this process 'indirect election' is not accurate, because there are so many stages of the filtration of public opinion that you cannot say that the people have any real voice or choice in the election of councillors. The councillors are not responsible to the delegates who serve a temporary purpose and then disappear; the delegates are not responsible to their respective boards, for it matters little to them what these boards think of their actions; the boards are not

responsible to the people, for the people elect them for quite different purposes, and the election of members to the Council is certainly not one of them. ...To call a member elected by this tortuous process a representative of the people is a misnomer. What is the extent of the franchise upon which even this peculiar election is based? Some twenty or twenty-five votes in a city of a hundred or two hundred thousand souls. If one of the principal functions of popular institutions is to give political education to the people, what can you say of a system in which not more than one in a thousand can have the slightest interest? As an instrument of popular education the present system is a failure."<sup>201</sup> It was necessary, if the representative system were to be given a fair trial in India, to do away with the system of indirect elections altogether, to abolish the delegation system, and to form new constituencies of men with certain educational and property qualifications.

(2) The great advance claimed by the Morley-Minto Reforms was that they for the first time allowed non-official majorities in Provincial Legislatures. But when these non-official majorities were analysed, what did we find? They were made of partly elected and partly nominated members. The official bloc and the nominated bloc generally pulled together in support of Government measures when necessary. Among the elected members there were representatives of special constituencies—like the landlords, the Chambers of Commerce, and so on. The landlords could be elected from the usual constituencies; and some of them were nominated also. They, therefore, got a representation out of all proportion to their number or usefulness, and could only be useful to the bureaucracy as a counterpoise to the opinions of the advanced classes. The educated middle-classes who alone could be expected to help the Government to mould Indian institutions in accordance with the needs of the time were practically nowhere. The non-official majorities were, therefore, purely illusory.

The Reforms were not, however, mere make-believes. They were necessary steps in the right direction; and if properly utilised, they prepared the people for the next advance. Granted that the defeat of a measure was a foregone conclusion, even then the debate put the Government upon its defence, and made it necessary for it to bring its justification before the public. These Councils "have supplied the motive force where it was lacking, they have infused energy where it was needed, they have attempted to act, though not always with success, as a brake when the wheels of the State were running over slippery rails and they have corrected errors: what is more, they have made their influence felt on the administrative machinery of Government." 202

The Liberals wisely stressed the necessity of taking a really responsible and sober view of the opportunities so far offered to Indian talent and character. The success of the Reformed Councils rested upon Indians. Institutions in themselves could do little good, if the spirit and intelligence which should animate them were not there. There was, henceforth, in local bodies, in provincial legislatures, the Imperial Legislative Council, the Executives, a greater demand on Indians for genuine interest in public affairs, burning zeal for the welfare of all classes, a conscientious and thorough-going study of all national and local problems, freedom from bias, class prejudices and, above all, sound and calm judgment, wide outlook and far-reaching statesmanship. New institutions made new calls and Indians must show themselves equal to these demands.

### 13. Movement for Responsible Government.

The years that followed the inauguration of the new reforms were years of constitutional restlessness. Lord Morley's concessions were to some extent far-reaching: but they could not satisfy even Moderate opinion. His decision to open the doors of the India Council and the Viceroy's Executive Council was a great decision made against heavy odds. It was felt in many

officials that Indians could not be trusted with the civil and military secrets that would inevitably come before the Viceroy's Cabinet; but Lord Morley had made up his mind, and his decision has been amply justified by subsequent experience. It opened positions of the highest honour and dignity in the Government to Indians of ability and integrity.

But the Government's task was not easy. They had to suppress the Extremists and to rally the Moderates. They, therefore, had to pursue a policy of repression, pass reactionary measures, gag the Press, and send to jail or exile a number of popular leaders. This policy seemed to achieve temporarily a certain measure of success: but it inevitably embittered the public mind. The gulf between the people and the Government became wider and wider: and when Lokamanya Tilak returned from the jail in 1914, he soon became a great popular hero. In 1915, Gokhale passed away: and the Congress of that year amended its constitution to facilitate the reunion with the Extremist Party.

The year 1916 was a great year in the history of the Congress. It marked the beginning of a new national life all over the country. The union of the Moderates and the Extremists for the first time after the Surat split of 1907 changed the very complexion of that body and made it really representative of the most advanced political opinion in the country. Since 1907, the Congress had ceased to be a really popular body. Its Presidential addresses had become bolder and bolder: but it lacked touch with the life of the masses. The return of the Extremist to the Congress undoubtedly gave the Congress a new life and enabled it to be much bolder in its constitutional demands.

But this was not all. The Muslims had so far chosen to stay away from the Congress as a body. But year after year, after the Morley-Minto Reforms, the Muslims became more and more nationalist, more and more comprehensive in their demands. Identical resolutions were passed by the Muslim League and the



Congress on matters of fundamental importance: and both the bodies felt that they would gain immeasurably and lose nothing, if they combined their forces. In 1913, at the Karachi Congress, the Congress "placed on record its appreciation of the adoption by the All-India Muslim League of the idea of Self-Government for India within the British Empire," and agreed with the League that there should be harmonious co-operation between the Hindus and the Muslims. It was further agreed both by the League and the Congress that the "leaders of the different communities would make every endeavour to find a *modus operandi* for joint and concerted action on all questions of national good and earnestly appealed to all sections to help the object they had at heart." In 1916, the Lucknow pact was signed; and the Congress had to accept the principle of communal elections.

In the meantime, the Government was busy devising ways of conciliation. In 1911, the King-Emperor visited India and a great Durbar was held at Delhi for the purpose of proclaiming His Majesty's accession to the throne. It was calculated to strike the imagination of an Oriental people and to rouse their loyalty. The Partition of Bengal was annulled and the capital was transferred from Calcutta to Delhi. In 1914, the Great War broke out, and India rallied to the cause of the Empire. Lord Hardinge made notable Pronouncement in 1915.

"England has instilled into this country the culture and civilisation of the West with all the ideals of liberty and self-respect. It is not enough for her now to consider only the material outlook of India. It is necessary for her to cherish the aspirations, of which she has herself sown the seed, and English officials are gradually awakening to the fact that high as were the aims and remarkable the achievements of their predecessors, a still nobler task lies before them in the present and in the future in guiding the uncertain and faltering steps of Indian development along sure and safe paths. The new rôle of guide, philosopher, is opening before you, and it is worthy of your greatest efforts. It requires in you gifts of imagination and sympathy, and imposes

upon you self-sacrifice, for it means that slowly but surely you must divest yourselves of some of the power you have hitherto wielded. Let it be realised that great as has been England's mission in the past, she has a far more glorious task to fulfil in the future, in encouraging and guiding the political self-development of the people. The goal to which India may attain is still distant, and there may be many vicissitudes in her path, but I look forward with confidence to a time when strengthened by character and self-respect, and bound by ties of affection and gratitude, India may be regarded as a true friend of the Empire, and not merely, as a trusty dependent. The day for the complete fulfilment of this ideal is not yet, but it is to this distant vista that the British official should turn his eyes and he must grasp the fact that it is by his future success in this direction that the British efficiency and prestige may be judged. "204

This inspiring pronouncement put a new life into Indian politics. Hon. Mr. Sinha, as President of the Congress, urged immediately afterwards that there should be an authentic and definite proclamation with regard to which no evasion or misunderstanding may be possible. The Congress merely wanted a frank and full statement of the Government policy, an ungrudging approval of the goal to which India aspired, an "inflexible resolution to equip India for her journey and to furnish her escort on the long and weary road."205 Such a declaration of policy was expected to touch the heart and imagination of a despairing people.

In the meantime, the Congress welcomed the invitation by the Imperial Government to India to send a representative to London to help the Imperial Conference with advice and information.

#### 14. The Congress-League Scheme.

The Indian Liberals were not satisfied with the existing administration either as regards its structure or as regards the

policy it pursued, both in fundamentals and in details. Criticism of parts soon ceased to be instructive and developed into criticism of the whole. The fiction of representative government became practically an obsolete fiction, and the reality of it now became an overdue reform. There was a stir and palpitation in the whole body politic; and the politicians felt that the opportune moment had come when India must boldly speak out her innermost feelings and wishes. The revival of the Extremist Party and its identification with the Congress, the union of the Hindus and the Mahomedans, the quickening forces set in motion by the great war, all helped to make a great constitutional effort inevitable.

Let us take a general survey of the whole Constitutional problem as the Liberals saw it in 1917.

The position of India in the Empire had for some years caused serious misgivings to the Indian political mind. There was the problem of emigration. Here, India wanted the full right of citizenship which included the right to settle in any part of the Empire. But the right of free movement within the Empire was limited by the right of the local governments to restrict immigration. The Indians, however, felt that there was not sufficient reciprocity, that they were not respected as a people or nation, that they were treated worse than the nationals of other Asiatic powers, that their status of British citizenship was completely ignored, and that the Indian Government did not champion their interests and honour adequately. The acute discontent felt by India on this point touched both Hindus and Mahomedans, Liberals and Extremists equally, and drove them to secure an adequate recognition of their proper place in the Empire.

The problem of immigration into overseas British territories was partly a racial and partly an economic question. The problem of Tariffs was an economic question pure and simple. The former was looked at from the point of view of the white races; the latter more from the point of view of the economic interests of the United Kingdom. This question was less a question

of sentiment and more of material interests. Had India any special economic needs and interests of her own? If she had, who was to represent them, who was to fight for them, who was to look after them? The more Liberal politicians thought about India, the more they were driven to the conclusion that economics was at the root of all politics, that the question for India as well as every other country was the question of material self-preservation and that this question, more than any other, demanded that India must evolve Governmental organs which could do full justice to her needs in this vital matter. The British Empire was a giant organisation, with its main centre at London and many subordinate centres in the various Colonies and dependencies. The Colonial centres became early self-conscious and fought hard for internal autonomy in all economic and fiscal matters. They had won their point: but India still remained tacked on to the Empire and was not supposed to have needs and interests and problems different from or opposed to the needs and interests of the Empire and especially of the United Kingdom. If a policy of protection suited England at one stage, it was adopted and Indian products were shut out from the English markets by tariffs; if a policy of free trade suited England better at another stage, India was asked to accept, to keep her doors wide open for the manufactures of all countries and to specialise in certain agricultural industries in the name of sound economics; if a policy of imperial preference was suggested as the best economic policy of the Empire as a whole, India was expected to fall into line and to think that what suited the Empire was bound to be in her best interests as well. The imposition of the excise duty on Indian cotton manufactures only served to bring out into glaring relief the palpable iniquity of the whole system and gave a proof, if a proof were needed, of the complete subordination of the economic interests of India to the economic interests of Lancashire. Even Sir Valentine Chirol had to write: "No measure has done greater injury to the cause of free trade in India or more permanent discredit to British rule than the excise duty on the Indian manufactures in cotton and none has done more to undermine the Indian faith in

principles of justice upon which British rule claims, and on the whole legitimately claims, to be based."<sup>206</sup> Hence the growth of the school of protectionism in India. In 1915, the Indian National Congress adopted a resolution demanding that in the best interests of the people of India, the Government of India should have complete fiscal freedom. But the Government of India owed its position to and derived its mandate from the British Government. It had not been able, therefore, to stand up for India's interests in that unequivocal fashion which Indians had desired it to do. It must be said to its credit that now and then it had championed the Indian point of view: but then it had generally proved not particularly effective because of its own position. Hence Indian politicians were driven, step by step, by the relentless pressure of facts, to the ideal of Self-Government.

The question, therefore, of real constitutional importance was: who controlled the ultimate direction of affairs in India? Could the ultimate authority be expected to understand and represent the best interests of India? Were Indians to expect from its past record and its present constitution an effective assertion, whether in the domestic or the foreign sphere, of India's just claims and desires? The ultimate sovereignty of India, so far, lay in the British Parliament representing British democracy. British democracy was too busy with its problems to care to understand what India really wanted or needed; and its interest in India might well be different from India's interest in herself. The British Parliament undertook the complete direction of Indian affairs in 1858. There was a general lack of knowledge as well as of interest among Members of Parliament on Indian matters; and Parliament was, in any case, too busy to devote much time and attention to Indian problems. "A broken head in Cold Bath Fields produces a greater sensation among us than three pitched battles in India." (Macaulay) It had been further generally agreed to keep Indian questions outside party politics, one consequence of which was to make Indian questions non-controversial, and, thus, not likely to receive their full measure of criticism from the Opposition. This had sometimes meant according to the special view-point that it would

be better if Indian problems were decided on their own intrinsic merits without reference to party loyalty and party fortunes; or, alternatively, that India was to be the object of exploitation and domination by both parties and, therefore, should not be dragged in to divide them. The result was that India attracted very little attention in Parliament. Individual members, like Fawcett, for example, who was called the "Member for India," might rouse Parliament from its usual lethargy; but, in a sense, every member was a "Member for India," that is to say, India was everybody's business and, therefore, nobody's business.

The real power, thus, was lodged with the Home Government. The Cabinet, through a Secretary of State, "have an inexpugnable right, subject to law, to dictate policy, to initiate instructions, to reject proposals, to have the last word on every question that arises and the first word on every question that ought to arise." The Secretary of State for India was assisted by a Council which was a purely advisory body. It was intended that the main function of the Secretary of State in Council was "not to direct the details of administration but to scrutinise and revise the past acts of the Indian Government, to lay down principles, and to issue general directions for their guidance and to give or refuse sanction to great political events which are referred home for approval." There had been controversies regarding the exact spheres of the Home Government and the Government of India respectively *vis-a-vis* one another; but as the Duke of Argyll said, as Secretary of State: "the Government of India are merely executive officers of the Home Government, who hold the ultimate power of requiring the Governor-General to introduce a measure and of requiring also all the official members of the Legislative Council to vote for it."

Such was the constitutional position as regards the ultimate power with regard to India for all major questions of policy. Now, the cry of the Indian Liberals was for a Government in India which would derive its mandate not from the people of Great Britain but from the people of India. They demanded the appli-

cation of the democratic principle to the government of their own country. They were convinced that under no other system Indian interests were absolutely safe. Self-government in India, as Lord Morley said, meant two things. "In one sense, it touches the relations of the indigenous population to the European authorities, whether central and paramount, or provincial and local. In another sense, it concerns the relation between both the people and the organs of European authority in India on the one side and the organs of Home Government on the other. The distinction is in the highest degree important. The popular claim under the first head, though not easy to adjust, is easy to understand: it founds itself on democratic principles borrowed from ourselves both at home and in the self-governing Dominions. The second is different. It has not yet taken formidable shape, but it may soon. The ruling authority in India is sure to find itself fortified from pressure from the new councils in forcing the Indian interests, and what is more, the Indian view of such interests, against any tendency in England to postpone them to home interests."<sup>107</sup> The Indian problem was thus twofold. It had to emancipate the Government of India from the fetters of "Home" influences, and also to bring it under the control of the Indian democracy

The Indian politicians tried to revive the interest of the British Parliament in Indian affairs. They always welcomed a broadside of criticism on Indian measures from non-official members of Parliament. They suggested that the salary of the Secretary of State should be placed on the British estimates: this would subject the debate on his salary to a party vote and arouse attention. Secondly, they often suggested that India should be directly represented in Parliament. In 1904, the Congress passed a resolution to the effect that each province or presidency of India should be allowed the franchise of returning at least two members to the British House of Commons. The President of the 27th Congress argued that the scheme was originally Disraeli's, that Pondicherry elected members to the

French Chamber, and Goa to the Portuguese Parliament, that when Parliament was the ultimate directing power, it was but proper that the Indian view might be placed before the Houses for consideration, and that it would find India and England together in close union. It had been further pointed out that the presence of India's own representative in the House could alone generate a new and intelligent interest among members of Parliament, that Parliamentary pressure then would be a very valuable check on the autocracy of the Indian bureaucrats, that the right of representation in Parliament was a part of the privilege of equal citizenship offered to India by the Queen's Proclamation, that Ireland was able to make an impression upon English politics largely by the presence of Irish members in the House of Commons, that if India were to be redeemed through the British connection, the battle must be fought on British and not on Indian soil. It was said that "it is not England's heart that is steeled against India, but it is her ear that is deaf to her cries." Hence it was necessary to gain access to the ear of England by carrying on agitation in Great Britain, and above all, in the British Parliament <sup>208</sup>

The Congress proposed to make the governing authorities in India more and more independent of the Home Government and bring them more and more under the influence of the people. The control should be relaxed gradually from above. In the meantime, a partial reconstruction of the Home Government was proposed by the suggestion of mending or ending the India Council. The India Council was condemned in the early Congresses as a body of Anglo-Indians sitting in judgment on themselves, an oligarchy of fossilized Indian administrators. The main objection was to the composition of that body. The retired Anglo-Indian officials were held to be reactionary with regard to all progressive measures and keen on the preservation of the claims of vested interests. "True, they have had a great experience of Indian affairs, but it is an experience naturally one-sided; it is no disparagement to them to say that they have hardly been



## 298 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

in touch with the main currents of Indian life which have flowed unnoticed past their feet. I do not entirely blame them. Ability and efficiency may be the heritage of the Civil Service, developed by training and tradition, and may go a long way, but they are not of much help when one has to penetrate the screen which differences in religion, language, customs and modes of thought have set between us, a screen rendered denser by a false sense of prestige on the one side, and not unnatural reserve and sensitiveness on the other..... Thus they have become a second check on the Viceroy and the Secretary of State instead of being a guiding and motive force.”<sup>209</sup> In these words, President Basu exposed the useless and the mischievous character of the Council from the Indian point of view. He welcomed the Marquess of Crewe's Council of India Bill, which made statutory provision for the inclusion in the Council of two Indian members and enabled the Secretary of State in certain matters where he had to act with the advice of the majority of his Council, to dispense with such advice. The Indian Liberals greeted Lord Morley's decision to have two Indian members on the Council: but they desired that these members should be elected in some way and not nominated. Their whole aim was to bring the Secretary of State for India into line with the other Secretaries of State and place him under greater Parliamentary control. They felt that they were hundreds of miles away from freedom, away from representative government, as long as the whole fiscal, financial, currency policy of the Government of India was in the hands of the Secretary of State in Council, over whom Parliamentary control in fact was purely nominal.

It follows that if the imperial control were to relax, there should be a simultaneous growth of democratic institutions in India to take its place in due course of time. The Congress ideal was indeed self-government within the Empire: it had to be evolved by stages and at each stage the surrounding limitations and safeguards were to be relaxed in favour of a more and more complete democracy. The position given to the Indians in both

the Provincial and the Imperial Legislatures under the constitution of 1909, was very unsatisfactory. It was now proposed that the standing official majority in the central legislature should go. Instead of the official majority in the central legislature, and the non-official majority in the provinces, there should be elective majorities. The Congress-League scheme (1916) suggested that (1) the strength of the Imperial Legislative Council should be 150; (2) four-fifths of its members should be elected; (3) the franchise should be broadened; (4) the President of the Council should be elected by the Council itself. The same principles were to be applied to the Provincial Legislatures. In this way the Congress pressed for a fuller application of the representative principle to the Legislatures of India.

If the Legislative Councils were not to be mere automata for the registration of Government decisions, there should be further development of their scope and functions. The Congress proposed that (1) the right of asking supplementary questions should not be restricted to the member putting the question; (2) a special meeting of the Council should be summoned on a requisition by not less than one-eighth of the members; (3) all bills other than money bills should be introduced into the Council in accordance with the rules made in that behalf by the Council itself and the consent of the Executive Government should not be required there for, (4) the Budget as a whole, as well as the individual Bills embodying financial proposals should be submitted for the vote of the Legislative Council. Similar rules were proposed for the Provincial Legislative Councils.

The ideal for which the Congress was fighting was the establishment of autonomy in internal matters both in the Provinces and in the Central Government, so far as possible, consistently with the maintenance of the imperial authority. It declared the necessity for a fuller representation of the people's wishes and interests and a larger scope for criticism of the Government policy. But the formulation of the people's will on the floor of the Legislature was one thing; and its embodiment in legislation

## 300 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

and administration was a different thing. Thus, there were two problems which confronted the exponents of this partial democracy in India : what subjects should be set apart as subjects of imperial importance, and, secondly, as regards domestic questions, how far should the voice of the Legislatures prevail ?

Thus we come to the constitution of the Executive and the relation of the Executive to the Legislative. The general framework of the executives was to remain unaltered: it was suggested that the Governors should not belong to the Indian Civil Service or any of the permanent services. The Congress proposed that (1) half of the members of the Executive Councils should be Indians; (2) the Indian members should be elected members of the Legislatures; (3) members of the Indian Civil Service should not be ordinarily appointed to the Executive Council. It was laid down that the Government of India should limit itself to general supervision over the Provincial Governments and should avoid interference in the local affairs and that it should be as far as possible independent of the Secretary of State in all legislative and administrative matters <sup>210</sup>

The crucial question was the relation of the Executive to the Legislatures. The Congress wisely pressed for autonomy in internal matters only. The supremacy of the Executive was to be safeguarded in all matters relating to army, navy, and foreign affairs. The Indian States were kept outside the scheme as they did not desire to interfere or to be interfered with. The essential point of the whole scheme was that as regards all other matters, as regards the fiscal, financial, and general economic policy, the voice of the Legislature was to prevail. The Congress concentrated its attention upon fiscal autonomy: it wanted freedom to organise the economic life of the country in accordance with India's needs and interests and not in obedience to perpetual dictation from Whitehall.

Here was a new ideal for the first time authoritatively put forth by Indian politicians. The old ideal of representative

government was now being replaced by the ideal of responsible government. The proposal to introduce the principle of responsibility into the heart of the Indian Government was certainly revolutionary; it was a daring proposal because it at once transferred the centre of gravity from Whitehall to Delhi, from the British people and the British Parliament, to the Indian people and the Indian Parliament. The aim of the Congress was to bring the whole internal policy under the control of the people. The vague idea of self-government was thus defined and brought within the range of practical politics.

Yet this scheme fell short of the ideal of full responsible government. Expenditure on the army and the navy was not to be subject to the sanction of the legislature. This was one serious limitation on financial autonomy. The scheme proposed an irremovable Executive: it might or might not command the confidence of the Legislature; its life was independent of the Legislature. There was further the right of the Governor-General to veto any provincial legislation, and of the Crown as regards all legislation, provincial or imperial. Subject to some such safeguards, the Legislature was to have power not only to criticise and discuss Government proposals, but to pass resolutions which were meant to be binding on the Executive as well.

This was the first great effort on the part of the Congress at constitution making. This effort was the outcome of all the schools of Indian political thought. The Muslim had joined hands with the Congress in drafting the scheme: and the Extremists had joined the Moderates in taking a united stand on these constitutional demands. It was this fact of a union of national forces, communal and political, which lent such weight to the scheme. It was no longer an effort in academic thinking; it was a part of political life itself. The long continuous effort of the Congress in the direction of a fuller share in the Government and a greater control over it thus expressed itself in this constitutional document. The Nineteen Members' Memorandum, Gokhale's scheme, and

above all, the Congress-League Scheme are all epoch-making in this sense.

### 13. A General Survey.

The Indian Liberals are a much-neglected and much-abused party to-day, and are condemned by the average man in India as a body of sycophants and self-seekers. This verdict is primarily passed upon the Liberals of to-day, but it is then, by a convenient fiction, extended to the whole School of thinkers and workers from the dawn of the new Indian political consciousness until the present time. This is due to a number of factors: but above all to the neglect of the historical method in our study. What is bad to-day, we argue, must be bad always and bad in itself. If Indian Liberalism fails to be the great driving force in Indian life to-day, it is argued, then it must always have been a senile doctrine incapable of giving a lead to a great people. The result of this attitude of contempt towards this great school of thought is a neglect of the study of the sources from which it derived its inspiration, the conditions which gave rise to it, the leading personalities which gave it body and shape and stood for it, through good report and evil, the nature of its essential ideas and their bearing upon the country's well-being, the relations in which it stands to other rival schools of Indian thought, the element of vitality which it contained not only for the age in which it flourished, but also to some extent for our age to-day, and in a way, for all ages, the limitations which brought it to an early end as the fundamental current in Indian thought and life to-day, at least in appearance. But such an attitude, though to some extent justifiable in the school which immediately follows it, is not at all proper in the student of Indian political thought. It is the outcome of a habit of sloppy thinking, a superciliousness born of ignorance and superficiality and political prejudices. It leads the unthinking Indians of to-day into practical blunders; it goads them on to false courses of action, and lands them in false situations. The Indian problem, it has been said a thousand times, but it may continue

to be said a thousand times more, is a very complex problem. This is the first fact to be grasped about it; and whoever neglects it neglects it at his and his country's peril. As the problem is complex, there are necessarily many approaches to it: and each of these approaches, each of these ways of understanding and tackling it is worthy of our study, if not our trial. If ever we are to solve it, if ever we are to get at the heart of it, it can only be by a patient study of the possibilities of each of the diverse methods tried in the past and capable of being tried in the future. Truth is great and will prevail: but in the meantime, the most important question not only academically but as a most serious practical proposition, is—what is truth? It may not be easy to answer this question, but the attitude of jesting Pilate or of the mocking patriot of to-day is certainly not the right attitude towards it. It is, therefore, very important that the Indian mind should not be so immersed in the present as to lose sight of the past, because in losing sight of the past, it deliberately lets go a very valuable instrument of insight both into the present and the future. Let not the zealous patriot of to-day spurn aside this long episode in our thinking as irrelevant or useless or mischievous. Let us not, like ignorant and silly children, show ourselves incapable of understanding or revering our past, because even if this attitude is a valuable one, it is certainly born of the past. The present is always the outcome of the past: and granted that the present is an immeasurable advance over the past, even then it owes its existence to that past and is conditioned by it. It is not necessary for us to accept all the results of their thinking; it may be even necessary for us at some time to kick away the ladder by which we have risen to truth; but still let us call it a ladder which helped us in some way or other to our attainment of our present position.

The Indian Liberals, like every great school of thought, had their characteristic strength and characteristic weaknesses. The characteristic weaknesses of this school have been most unsparingly exposed and dilated upon again and again by the School

## 304 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

which immediately succeeded it. Historical developments have no mercy for individuals or parties; they ruthlessly punish our weaknesses and bring out all that we really stand for, for good or evil in the life of ourselves and our people. This work of criticism may thus be safely left to the outstanding representatives of the opposite school and we may confine ourselves to a summary of the essential characteristics and valuable contributions of the school of Liberals. The school of Liberals has certainly not passed into history for all time; it will be truer to say that it will continue to flourish for all time. But as a dominant force in Indian thought and life, it tends to disappear from 1917.

The history of Indian politics, not as a series of outer facts or happenings, but as a development of inner thought, under the British, from 1885-1905, is the history of the Indian National Congress; and the history of the Indian National Congress from 1885 to 1917, is the history of the Indian Liberal School. This school, therefore, primarily formed a body of politicians and not political philosophers. They were thinkers: but they were thinkers who thought not for the sake of thought as such but essentially for action. To some extent this is the characteristic of modern Indian political thought. In a way all thought is pragmatic, conditioned by the concrete situations which confront thinkers and developed under the pressure of certain dominant interests and ends. But there is a difference between the political thinking of a Plato or an Aristotle, a Green or a Bosanquet, and a Gladstone or a Disraeli, a Baldwin or a Lloyd George. The Political thinking of philosophers is an effort in speculative politics: it has fewer assumptions, it generalises too much, it is necessarily deeper and more thorough-going. In other words, there is the mark of system upon it; it tries to be as scientific as possible. The political thinking of politicians primarily takes into consideration the actual situation to which it addresses itself, does not ask fundamental questions or try to answer them, takes much for granted, and is above all interested in solving concrete problems

which confront them, their party, their people, as best as they can, leaving the wider bearings of their thought to more abstruse and philosophic thinkers. Thus, we have men of action like Napoleon or the Kaiser who primarily act and do not think; politicians who fight with their ideas and theories but fight their immediate antagonists with a view to overcome specific situations; and, lastly, philosophers and thinkers who may start from and return to particular political facts but whose main interest is in pure truth, truth for truth's sake, truth for humanity's sake, truth for all, truth as such. The Indian political thinkers belong to the second type. They develop theories, but mainly as weapons to fight their particular battles. A Gokhale or a Bannerjee will never have a place, therefore, in the history of political thought of the world as a Hegel or a Green or a Bosanquet, because he does not put forth new theories, because he does not reinterpret old theories, because he does not make any contribution to the illumination of any basic political concepts. His subject is not pure politics, but applied politics; his essays in thinking are essays in applied politics. The line, however, between pure and applied politics is a thin and fluctuating one and the one ever passes into the other. The universal is always implicit in the particular; what is true in one case is likely to be true in all similar cases. It is so with Indian thought. Indian thought is the response of the Indian intellect to the Indian environment. But the problems which engage its attention are the same which engage every nation when it passes through the same stage of culture. The effort of the Indian mind to do justice to Indian problems in the light of its own experience certainly deserves the attention of the world not merely because India comprises a population of three hundred millions of people, but also because indirectly it throws some light on the common problems of humanity everywhere.

Indian Liberalism is the product of European Liberalism. The Indian intellectuals have almost literally sat at the feet of English Liberals and derived their inspiration from them. They repeated



the same arguments which were advanced by Mill and Macaulay. Their ideals were the same. Parliamentary Government in those days was considered to be the panacea for all ills: it, therefore, was assumed to be the ideal suited to India also and capable of solving her problems. Give us democracy, they said, give us the same Parliamentary institutions which you Englishmen enjoy, and we will do the same wonderful things which you did. They were the genuine disciples of Bentham and Rousseau. Their great merit lay in being the interpreters of European Liberal ideal to the people of India. They were fired by the constitutional history of Great Britain and the self-governing Colonies: and they naturally concluded that the same history would have to be repeated in India. Indian history to them was an extension of English history: Indian politics was the further development of English politics.

Thus they were always closely allied with the official school or the English school of Indian thought. The literature of the Congress and the speeches of its stalwarts bristle with quotations from the official and non-official thought of England about India. Indian Liberalism and British Liberal Imperialism often appeared to shake hands with each other. Both schools appeared to have the same ideals: both schools thought in almost identical terms, as regards Indian problems. The difference was only as regards the tempo of national progress. The Moderate mind thoroughly appreciated each constitutional advance; the Morley-Minto reforms and still more the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms did appear to them really great gestures on the part of Great Britain. They saw in them clear and convincing proofs of the sincerity of British statesmanship to stand by India and to do justice to her. Both these schools believed in the theoretical doctrine of equality of citizenship and the gradual evolution of that citizenship under the protecting wings of the British Empire. The ideal for India for both was national autonomy in some form or other consistently with the imperial paramountcy.

The Indian Liberals always congratulated themselves on the essentially practical character of their demands. This practicality or healthy realism again allied them with the Liberal Imperial mind of Great Britain. The realisation of the complexity of the Indian problem—the vastness of the country, its traditional weaknesses, its horrible ignorance and superstition, the selfishness of the castes, the communities, and individuals, the backwardness of the women and the degradation of the depressed classes—was shared by the Indian and the English Liberal alike. Hence they were pitted against any precipitous change, and both believed absolutely in the development of self-government by stages. Hence both believed in the essentially civilizing mission of Great Britain and the period of apprenticeship which the Indian nation must go through, before it was qualified for full-fledged freedom. Both schools realised the complete helplessness of India, both within and without, apart from the powerful support of Britain. Both of them deeply appreciated the blessings of peace and order which flowed from the British connection; both felt that without this peace and order, it was impossible for constitutional freedom to grow. The ideal in both cases was a gradual liberalization of political institutions, till India attained something like Dominion Status in the vast British Commonwealth. Hence both sincerely repudiated all violent methods in politics and feared nothing more than anarchy.

The Indian Liberal had the strength and the wisdom to face facts fairly and squarely. He was not necessarily a coward or a craven, when he hugged the British connection to his bosom. He considered the co-operation of Great Britain as absolutely indispensable, not only for the maintenance of the conditions of law and order, but also for the development of genuine democratic institutions. The Britisher, he accepted not merely as a policeman, as a sentinel at the gate, but also as a teacher, a guide, a friend, and a philosopher. The inspiration to a larger life had come, according to him, from Great Britain; what was the use of attacking this very fount of inspiration? Great Britain was the

## 308 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

spiritual home of the Indian Liberal, it was not a country which held India by force against her will, but a country which was linked by Divine Providence with his own for the mutual advantage of both. It was not in a spirit of self-seeking, not in a desire to play for safety first, that the Moderate clung to the Empire, as a child clings to the mother. It was a passionate conviction with him that Britain must continue to play her rôle if India ever were to rise to the level of modern civilized communities.

Let it be firmly planted in our mind, if we are to do justice to this school, that the Moderate never accepted the mere *status quo*, never acquiesced in the existing order, taking it to be the best of all orders in the best of all worlds. He was not a foolish, self-complacent optimist, with an incurable attachment to his own interests, his own safety, and the cause of his Empire, making a curious synthesis of loyalty, patriotism, and individual and class enlightened self-interest. He was fired, as patriots of other schools were, with a divine discontent; he did rise up with all the conviction of his soul against the sordid realities of the actual bureaucratic rule; he had his moments of revolt against the existing order as much as any extremist. His faith was kept alive by the Empire-ideal, by the magnificent promises of British statesmen, by the soothing and consoling music of the Queen's Proclamation, by the spirit of British history, and above all, by his faith in higher human nature generally, and the higher nature of the British in particular.

But granted that Britain was very slow and halting in her policy of real reform, and that she was becoming more and more a drag upon India's progress, less and less a help to her, the Liberal asked, what was the alternative? The Indian Liberal knew as well as the English Imperialist, the weaknesses of Indians and the tremendous difficulties of their task. What was the task? The task was the building up of a National State on a democratic basis. He felt that in this task the sympathy and co-operation of the British could always help and that their active antagonism or

subtle opposition would always hinder endlessly our progress towards our goal. We might not succeed easily in converting the British statesman to be a warm and disinterested friend of India: but we must not do anything to convert him into a bitter and implacable foe. We should be merely increasing our difficulties a hundredfold by violent tactics. Thus President Dhar utters a warning to the political hotheads: "In the pursuit of a high ideal we must not forget the difficulties that beset our path. Long and weary is the journey, said Burke, that lies before those who undertake to mould a people into the unity of a nation. Enthusiasm is good and idealism is good.....but enthusiasm and idealism cannot achieve impossibilities. Human nature is conservative and national progress is slow of foot. First the blade, then the ear, and after that the corn in the ear, this is the law of nature. Self-Government, such as obtains in the British Colonies, is a noble ideal, and we are perfectly justified in keeping that before our eyes; but is it attainable to-day or to-morrow or even in the lifetime of the present generation? Consider where we stand in the scale of civilization, when we have only four women and eighteen men per thousand who are literate, when there are millions of our countrymen whom we look upon as 'untouchables,' when we have about a hundred thousand widows of less than five years, and caste rules still forbid sea-voyage, and Mr. Basu's Special Marriage Bill is condemned as a dangerous innovation; when many Hindus do not sufficiently realise the fact that there are 65 millions whose interests and feelings have to be cared for and the Mahomedans are equally oblivious of the interests and feelings of 240 million Hindus-when this is the condition to which we have been brought by centuries of decay and degradation, to talk of a National Government for India to-day is to make ourselves the laughing-stock of the civilized world."<sup>11</sup>

Here we meet with another characteristic of Indian Liberalism. Political Liberals were really one with social and religious liberals, and both the political and social Liberals were practically one with the Imperial Liberals. Congressmen were deeply con-

### 310 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

scious of the social bearings of political reform and the political bearings of social reform. But they wanted differentiation of political from social activities with a view to facilitate concentration on each. The ideal of all these schools was the same: it was *the Modernisation of India*. A politically progressive India implied a socially progressive India and *vice versa*. They all looked to the West and not to the East for illumination; they all looked to the future and not to the past for inspiration. They considered the past of India to some extent glorious: but they generally liked to move away their eyes from the past to the future. They did not want to confuse political and social issues by invoking the dead ghosts of a fast retiring past, religion was no mysterious and elusive element to them: they saw superstition round them: they desired that science should take its place. They saw ignorance and prejudice masquerading in the name of religion; they wished that a new knowledge should make short work of all these doubtful heritages of the past. In fact, they considered the past to be a more of a burden than a help, more a source of mischief than a source of good. The British connection was specially welcome to them; because it meant the slow but sure emancipation of the Indian mind from its blind attachment to an unmeaning past. They wanted the whole man in India to be westernized not merely in form but in spirit; and they saw the salvation of India in a complete assimilation of the best western ideals. They panted for the ideal of a free man in a free State, a free Church in a free State, a free woman in a free society. The political Liberals observed a discreet silence with regard to the past and left the task of drastic criticism of social ways and customs to the party of social and religious reformers; because they did not want to alienate the sympathies of the orthodox masses. Their objective was social reform through education and legislation; and for both these agencies they looked to the British Government for help and guidance. They placed their hopes more in the British Government than even in an Indian Government for this work, because they thought the British Government would stand by progressive ideals to a greater extent than an Indian Government. When they

found that the British Government was hostile to active progress and did not want to antagonise the orthodox sections, they pleaded for a qualified type of representative government which would be run mostly by the advanced intellectuals of the Congress type. There can be no mistake about their ideal both in the social and the political sphere.

The Indian Liberals, therefore, stood boldly for the assertion of democratic ideals in all the realms of life. They were the first to dream the dream, they were the first to try to convert that dream into a reality—the dream of a democratic State in a democratic society in India. In trying to express this dream and give it bodily shape, they had to wrestle against heavy odds. They were pitted against the social die-hardism of the people on the one side and the political die-hardism of the Government on the other side. They had reason on their side; they had the great traditions of nineteenth century Europe behind them; they had the intellectual sympathy of the higher imperial mind of Great Britain in its best moments: but they had to oppose the deadweight of the bureaucratic tradition of the Government and the deadweight of ignorance of the caste-ridden masses. Their path was thus a difficult one; their loyalty to the British connection was soon interpreted by the rising intelligentsia of India as mere flattery of the authorities; their constant repetition of the democratic formulae earned for them the opprobrious nickname of mischievous political agitators at the hands of the British officials. But they had patience; they had sobriety; they had a sure grasp of facts; their judgment was on the whole sound, and, above all, they had faith in the greatness of their cause, the good sense of the people, and the liberty and justice-loving character of the British Government. As Prof. Thakore has said, "To seek to elevate one's mother country to a high level of prosperity and civilisation, to look upon the decision of stricken fields and uprooted dynasties as the judgment of over-ruling Providence, to grasp fully and firmly both the halves of this double concept of Divine Judgment as a deserved punishment to us for our sins, as our

*Karma*, as a no less deserved reward to the victors, as their *Karma*; to judge the paramount power and its agents by the best actions and the best thoughts and aspirations of their best representatives; to accept their professions about working for the prosperity and civilisation of this country as genuine, nay as inspired, and as doing them infinite credit, to accept their diagnosis of our downfall, at least as a working hypothesis; to exhibit the cosmopolitan fraternity (*bratā bhāra*) and wide toleration of Hindu culture at its best, by refusing to misunderstand even the excesses of proselytising zeal; to accept the missionaries in spite of their narrowness and prejudices as sincere and active friends with some really effective though novel ideas for the uplift of the country and as helpful checks upon the greed, cruelty, and assertiveness, natural to executive officers and soldiers armed with unlimited power, in a land densely ignorant and prostrate; knowing that half-hearted service was worse than none and that sullen non-co-operation was worse than disloyalty, open, active and manly, to serve every representative of the ruling power fully and faithfully in any and every capacity, however low, and finally, to apply themselves with all their might to English education and social reform, the purification of religion from superstitions and from corruptions, the removal of caste and local prejudices and limitations, the creation of a public opinion on public questions, and the training up of the people in the adoption of constitutional methods for the removal of constitutional grievances, and the progressive improvement of their position from the status of conquered subjects to that of equal citizens; these were the ideas which animated the best Indians of that generation; these were the ideas which enabled them to sow the seeds of Modern India. The motives and actions sprouting up out of a thought-bed of this description cannot be classed as mean or self-centred or materialistic or servile or denationalised. To suppose that these men, our grandfathers, merely pocketed their higher salaries and fees, that they merely caught the vices and rudeness of the unwashed sections of Anglo-Saxon humanity, that they merely learned from the foreign tyrants above them how to tyrannise more oppressively over their own coun-

trymen below them, and to question either their warm sentiments of loyalty to the British Raj, or the strong bonds of sympathy that grew up between them and the best of the local representatives of that Raj, is to be altogether blind to recorded history, or to discolour it most unjustifiably by the violent prejudices and passions of a later day."<sup>919</sup>

The essential mission of the Indian Liberal Party was to translate the great social and political ideals for which the Western Government in its highest conception stood, into the lives and thoughts, first, of the educated people of India and then, through them, of the masses. These ideals they saw in the march of, first, English and, then, European and American history; these ideals were enshrined in a classical form in literary writers like Burke, Macaulay, Morley or Mazzini; these ideals were again and again expressed in the Parliamentary speeches of the best English spokesmen and even in the authoritative declarations of the British Government. These ideals were in a germinal form actually planted on Indian soil by the British administration. Their business was to clarify these ideals in their relationship to Indian social and political life; to insist upon their proper interpretation and application to Indian problems; to hold forth and judge the acts and politics of the British bureaucrats and proconsuls in the light of these ideals; to ask them in the name of all that is best in the British character and British thought, to stand by them in their attitude towards India; and above all to educate slowly and to organise Indian public opinion in them.

These ideas are briefly expressed in the great mystical words which have been the dominant forces, in the life of modern civilized humanity, during the last two centuries; the words nationality, equality, constitutional rights and liberties, justice, democracy. The Moderates, however, were practical politicians and not doctrinaire philosophers; they were entirely unlike the metaphysicians of the French Revolution who tried to destroy and reconstruct a great society on *à priori* dogmas. They had profoundly assimilated the great conservative wisdom so eloquently set forth by Burke



### 314 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

in his thoughts on the French Revolution. They believed with Burke, that politics is unlike metaphysics or mathematics: but a matter essentially of compromises between right and wrong, expedient and inexpedient. "Nothing universal," said Burke, "can be rationally affirmed on any moral or any political subject. Pure metaphysical abstraction does not belong to these matters. The lines of morality are not like ideal lines of mathematics. They are broad and deep as well as long. They admit of exceptions, they demand modifications. These exceptions and modifications are not made by the process of logic, but by the rules of prudence. Prudence is not only the first in rank of the virtues political and moral but she is the director, the regulator, the standard of them all." The Moderates made use of the concepts of liberty and nationality, for example: but they were never mastered by them. They used them as tools, as serviceable instruments suited to a particular occasion, subject to certain limitations. They never pressed for the logical application to the bitter end of any principle however great. They were not mere matter-of-fact politicians, or opportunists who were merely interested in setting a situation temporarily right by any methods, right or wrong; they were political thinkers, who did derive their inspiration from great principles, but who knew the limits of the application of those principles to specific cases. Here again Burke brings out their attitude most excellently. "I never govern myself, no rational man ever does govern himself—by abstractions and universals. I do not put abstract ideas wholly out of any question, because I well know, that under that name I should dismiss principles; and that without the guide and light of sound, well-understood principles, all reasonings in politics, as in everything else, would be only a confused jumble of particular facts and details, without the means of drawing out any sort of theoretical or practical conclusion. A statesman differs from a professor in an university; the latter has only the general view of society; the former—the statesman—has a number of circumstances to combine with those general ideas, and to take into his consideration. Circumstances are infinite, are infinitely combined, are variable and transient. He

who does not take them into consideration is not erroneous, but stark mad...he is metaphysically mad." The Moderates never forgot that these concepts are abstract; that abstractions like liberty and equality are powerful instruments both for good and evil, that they should be used with caution and with a full regard for time, place, and circumstance. It is circumstances, as the high priest of conservatism has taught, which give to every political principle, its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect.

The Moderates were clever lawyers; they knew how to construct a case as brilliant advocates do; they used largely these concepts and abstractions because and in so far as they were used by their British masters. Their appeal always was to actual, historical facts and declarations and not to abstract sentiments or principles. We do not find in the Congress literature any elaborate discussions about the nature of representative government or its limitations. We do not find any scientific or philosophic discussions of the nature, value, and limits of the doctrine of nationality or the doctrine of equality. The Liberal leaders never bothered their heads much about the philosophic basis of their fight, about the first principles of their subject. This absence of a strongly theoretical note may deprive their utterances of much speculative value; but it gives their utterances a severely practical and realistic character. Their whole effort consisted in trying to find out the precise limits of applicability at each stage of these great principles both in the social and the political system of the day.

They took their stand upon the principle of equality; but by equality they meant equality between Indians and Englishmen. They fought hard against the principle of racial discrimination in the sphere of justice; look at their attitude in the Ilbert agitation. The Congress was not born then; but the Congress spirit was there long before the Congress was formally started. They fought hard against racial discrimination in the distribution or award of the highest posts in the administration; hence their fight for the Indianization of the services. They were bitter against the Arms

### 316 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

Act partly because there was racial discrimination there. They wholeheartedly joined the struggle of the Indian Emigrants against the Colonial governments, again because it was a fight against the principle of racial discrimination. They agitated incessantly for the institution of simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service, both in India and England for the same reason. Thus, they derived their inspiration from the abstract dogma of equality in a way, but in doing so they did not appeal to any theoretical equality, but to the equality promised to them in the Queen's Proclamation, or in the Charter Acts. It was a historic right, born out of historic occasions. It was not an abstract equality, but an equality in one sphere applied with regard to the relations between Englishmen and Indians.

Another principle for which they fought was that of liberty. Here again they deliberately interpreted liberty as that demanded by them in the political and the economic sphere. They wanted liberty of free criticism, subject to certain well-defined limitations. The right of free expression should be allowed in India in the same way and to the same extent as it was allowed in Great Britain. Thus, in a way, the principle of equality was partly at the back of this demand too. They would certainly welcome, justify, even demand Government action if they thought that in a particular case the right was grossly abused or, in general, if a state of things existed bordering on rebellion or active resistance to authority. But general restrictions on a Free Press in the name of imaginary danger, or the passing of Acts, like the Defence of India Act, again in anticipation of wide, lawless movements, they deprecated, all that put too much power into the hands of petty officials, all that interfered too much with the normal expression of free opinion, all that involved too great a threat to the continuance of the peaceful, undisturbed life of the masses, all that created more trouble, more discontent, more disaffection than it cured. The Congress always fought for the principle of free speech and free association. Criticism of the bureaucracy in a country like India was the only guarantee against a too great usurpation of power

or a too indiscriminate use of it at the hands of officials. There was no Parliamentary Government in the country and there was no responsible opposition in the Councils. How then were the people to express themselves? It was useless, it was mischievous, it might be fatal to disregard all criticism as the work of designing, disgruntled, irresponsible mischief-mongers, or of traitors who were always trying to run down and, if possible, to subvert the existing order. The supercilious attitude of the bureaucracy, which always congratulated itself upon its official infallibility, was the greatest bar to all progress in India; and the Congress leaders certainly did well in trying to safeguard the elementary right of public citizens to express in a perfectly legitimate and constitutional fashion all that they felt about the Government and its measures from time to time. Thus, K. T. Telang wrote criticising the Vernacular Press Act of Lord Lytton: "It appears to us to be a descent from the higher level of political status which under the wiser British Government we had already reached, into the slough of patriarchal rule and personal government. If there was one thing more than another which an advocate of the British Government could point as marking unmistakeably the superiority of it to bygone Governments, it was after the liberty of speech and thought, this reign of law which is now become to a considerable extent a theory of the past under the provisions of the Gagging Act.

"We believe, we cannot yet rule ourselves, and we believe that we cannot get any foreign rulers as good as the English. Wishing then as we do, from whatever motives, for the continuance of the British rule, we are extremely anxious that our rulers should do everything which they reasonably and properly can and may do, to keep the people at large contented, for in the last resort, as eminent British statesmen have always maintained, it is on the contentment and good-will of the people that the British Empire can rest most securely. Therefore, it must keep itself fully informed of the wants and feelings and thoughts of their subjects. And by the necessity of the case, they

## 318 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

being foreigners in the land, they can have few better sources of information than the newspapers and journals written by persons who, as being themselves of the people, necessarily know a great deal about the people. We venture to say in spite of the boast, that the ruling race has not yet succeeded in understanding us."

Such was their rationale of the principle of liberty, of free speech, and free association. The same principle of liberty they demanded in the sphere of government. By political liberty they did not mean the emancipation of India from British or foreign rule. This was not the type of negative freedom for which they were fighting. They demanded the right of free expression not merely in the Press and on the platform, but also in the councils of Government, and for the same objects. The wishes, the interests, the feelings, and the thoughts of the people should enter materially into Government policy, for no Government could rest securely except upon the basis of the contentment of the Governed. Here they took their stand upon a fundamental principle of all sound political thought, that the Government exists for the governed, and not *vice versa*. The primary justification of any Government is that it promotes the happiness and well-being of the people. This is the right basis of all rule. Whatever may be the origin of the Government, whether it is conquest or peaceful penetration or usurpation or transfer, it must be based not on mere might, the sword of the conqueror, but on the contentment of the people. This being granted, the next question is who is to decide what is for the good of the people and how? The Indian Liberal did not quarrel with the British Government merely on the ground that it was a foreign government; but on the ground that it chose to maintain deliberately its foreign character. In other words, it chose to rule the people arbitrarily from above, in obedience more to the wishes and interests of the British people and less to the wishes and interests of the Indian people. It derived its mandate from the British Parliament; and it had to carry out that mandate in a

spirit of perfect loyalty to the real masters. The very nature, position, constitution and functions of the Government of India disqualified it from being the genuine spokesman and champion of the interests of the people of India. Its character must be, therefore, very much altered before it could place itself in genuine contact with the mind of the people. The Indian Liberal argued that, in the abstract, one might or might not agree whether Governments existed always for the governed or not; but the British had laid down their policy in the clearest terms in the Queen's Proclamation, as well as in other great official utterances, and that they were obliged to base their policy on this principle. The next question then was: how were they to know what the best interests of the Indian people were? What were their feelings and wishes? Here lay the rub. Unless, therefore, the representatives of the people were called into counsel it was impossible for the rulers to know the inside of the mind of the Indian as regards their acts and policies. The Indian demand for political liberty during these years of a Liberal Congress meant in the first place the establishment of genuine representative institutions in the country, which should place in an authoritative form the people's point of view in all affairs before the Executive. Secondly, it meant that its expression should be effective in all internal matters. Instead of the Councils being the bodies to register the will of the Government, the Liberals wanted the Government to register the country's will as expressed by its chosen representatives. This they called Self-Government.

The problem, however, immediately arose as to the basis of a representative system. Here appeared another great principle which they went on asserting—the principle of nationality. A democratic system was the government of a people, for a people, by a people. But who constituted the people? Self-Government was a great formula: but the question arose as to where that self of India was and how was it to be located? These problems were bristling with difficulties, both theoretical and practical, for all peoples and also for India. The Indian Liberals were bold

## 320 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

enough to assert their faith that India was no longer, if ever it was, a mere geographical expression or a congeries of loosely-knit peoples at various stages of culture and divided by various lines, racial, linguistic, religious. The basis of their whole creed was the belief that there had arisen or there was in process of formation a new entity called the Indian nation. The Congress represented the first great attempt to organise the whole of India on the basis of a common nationality. Here was a nucleus of a future self-governing India. Here was a platform, where the best brains of the country met and talked and discussed together their common problems. Here, year after year, the Government policy was analysed, dissected, criticised from a national point of view. Here were formulated common policies, common programmes for the acceptance of the Government and the people.

The Indian Liberals boldly assumed that the Indians had practically become one single nation, with a single purpose and will of its own. Indian nationalism was born at last, with the birth of the Congress. It had also grown with its growth and strengthened with its strength. This Indian nationalism became more and more vocal, more and more assertive. There was, therefore, a demand for the expression and fulfilment of the essential needs of this new-born child. In the political sphere, the demand first for representative and then a qualified form of responsible government was made on behalf of this newly awakened political entity, called the Indian nation. In the economic sphere, the same Indian nation demanded that it should be allowed to live its life in its own way, that it should be allowed to formulate and carry out a genuine national economic policy, which would conserve and develop the best national interests. Hence the demand for fiscal and financial autonomy. The Indian Liberal thus boldly stood out for a policy of economic nationalism as opposed to the policy of British economic imperialism. The fight for Swadeshi, the demand for protection, the demand for a reconstruction of the currency and financial system, the struggle for the industrialisation of the country, were all meant to further this

policy of economic nationalism. The root of the whole fight was the conviction that India was primarily for the Indians, that Indian interests should not be sacrificed at the altar of imperial or international interests, that India having found her own soul, was next demanding a perfectly genuine fulfilment of the essential needs of that soul.

The Liberals laid the foundation of a school of independent political and economic criticism in the country. That Indian problems are to-day increasingly studied from an Indian point of view is due to them. The spirit which demanded passive acquiescence in and active loyalty to the powers that be, now disappears from Indian life. India no longer accepts a vegetable existence; is no longer content with receiving more and more of good and enlightened administration. The patriarchal ideal of Government now gives way to a more arduous democratic ideal. Democracy as an ideal is accepted definitely by this generation of Congressmen. Democracy brings with it not only additional privileges but additional responsibilities. The problems which never appeared on the horizon under the old forms of Government now appear in hydra-headed form. But there is no going back.

The Indian Liberals did not for a moment think that mere agitation for reform would bring with it the necessary aptitude for it. Agitation, however, goes a great way towards preparing the public mind for great changes. Agitation, nevertheless, must be constitutional agitation, to be carried on ceaselessly both within the Councils and outside them. The insistence on and the application of constitutional methods of agitation was one characteristic and valuable part of the Indian Liberals' work. They had very great faith in the instrument of persuasion. They assumed that the British Government was made up of rational beings who required merely to be intellectually convinced of the necessity of liberalising Indian administration, both in their own interests and in the interests of the people of India, in order to be moved to do the needful. They had complete faith in the intrinsic reasonableness of their cause and they thought that they should



## 322 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

put their case properly again and again and hammer it into the consciousness both of the Indian people and the British Government. They, therefore, took great pains in mastering the facts of the case and presenting it in a very sober, well-balanced form before the public. Ceaseless knocking was bound to have its effect and if the same thing were shouted again and again, the mind had to respond to it. The searchlight of public criticism meant perpetual vigilance on the part of the leaders: and this criticism and this vigilance were sure to tell upon the mind of the administrators

The weapon of constitutional agitation was meant not only to rouse the conscience of the Government, but also of the people. The whole structure of a democratic government which the Liberals were trying to rear in India, depended upon the active and vigorous public opinion of the country. It was one of the functions of Congress propaganda to rouse the interest of the people in public questions, to acquaint the public mind with the essential facts of the case, to equip it with the necessary arguments, to enable it to see questions in their proper perspective. Here the Liberals trusted largely to education to bring about gradually the necessary change in the mind of the people

Constitutionalism further implied the active association of Indians, as opportunities developed, with all branches of political work, administrative and legislative. Parliamentary and administrative traditions do not grow up in a day. The Indian Liberals always advocated the fullest use of all available opportunities in local bodies, in the Legislatures, in high Government posts or in the Executive Councils, in order that Indians may get the necessary training for the successful running of these institutions. These opportunities were not to be considered as merely crumbs thrown to us, or sops to our spirit of grab, lust for power: but they were essentially means of training and bringing into full play our moral and intellectual qualities for great public tasks

Constitutionalism therefore contemplated peaceful develop-

ment of the people in the great tasks of modern democracy. The sense of responsibility must grow. The Government must not be looked upon as an alien agency meant only to be destroyed by any means: it was something into which we had to grow by patient effort and discipline. The Government further was absolutely essential, with its prestige and force, to this process of peaceful development: it should not be, therefore, run down in a spirit of light-heartedness. As Gokhale once put it, "Why, my Lord, even if I could defeat the Government to-day, I would not do it. I would not do it for this reason: the prestige of the Government is an important asset at the present stage of the country and I would not lightly disturb it." Here is that sense of responsibility which fully realized that the prestige of the Government was absolutely vital to any process of slow, organic change. It must be said that the Moderates really formed His Majesty's Opposition because, although they had no hope of coming into power in the near future, they still believed on the assumption that power might be some day transferred to the people's representatives, and, therefore, they never indulged in wild or irresponsible criticism.

The Indian Liberals accordingly stressed the necessity of law and order as much as the necessity of liberty. They were never tired of praising the British Government for the blessings of peace and order which it conferred upon India, because they knew too well that anarchy only led to despotism, and that peace and order were the only soil in which freedom could grow. The strongest point of Indian Liberalism was that it never allowed its passion for liberty to extinguish its love of order, or its passion for order to extinguish its love of liberty. This I believe to be the heart of their constitutional and political theory. The Imperial school was equally eloquent as regards the enormous utility of law and order: but often forgot that they are the conditions of life, but not life itself. The Liberals' love of order was of a different character: they stood for change, but peaceful, healthy, orderly change; and as order was absolutely necessary for this development, they stood by peace and order. A policy of coercion might

## 324 RISE AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIBERALISM

be occasionally necessary; but if there were widespread discontent, Government could not be permanently carried on by methods of repression. "There is only one way in which the wings of disaffection can be clipped and that is by the Government pursuing a policy of steady and courageous conciliation."<sup>213</sup>

National self-government, autonomous in all internal affairs, autonomous as regards its economic policy, to be attained gradually by methods of peaceful persuasion, universal education, and constitutional agitation was the goal of the Indian Liberals. But it must not be imagined that the Indian Liberal was confusing 'democratic forms' with democratic realities. It is easy to set up forms of Parliamentary Government, it is not so easy to develop the democratic spirit necessary to run them. As Herbert Spencer puts it: "The forms which freedom requires will not of themselves produce the reality of freedom in the absence of an appropriate national character any more than the most perfect mechanism will do its work in the absence of a motive power." In the same spirit K. T. Telang writes: "An elective system is only machinery, and to derive good results from it, it must be worked by good men. An elective system does not create good electors, or good representatives. On the contrary, good representatives, good electors, and a good system of election are three factors to a considerable extent dependent on each other, which only in combination yield the best results. Therefore, if a good system of election were conceded by the rulers the duty which we shall have to discharge will be all the greater and more exacting."<sup>214</sup> It is this consciousness of the fundamental requirements of a genuine democratic system together with the consciousness that Indians were really yet very far from having attained them, that made the Indian Liberals sober and restrained in their demands, made them insist upon a period of gradual preparation for each stage of political freedom, and made them ready to utilise every available avenue of perfecting national character open to them.

National self-government was to be reared on the basis of

national wisdom, national character, and national strength. It was impossible for Indians to run such a system successfully without these basic qualities. The difficulties of Indians are, said Telang, "in us, they are not outside of us but inside us. They are in our inertia, in our weakness, in our physical inability to sustain hard work." Real progress consisted in the strengthening of our moral fibre, in the development of the muscle, character, and the spirit of self-sacrifice in the average man; in the growth of the intellectual capacity to grasp thoroughly the essentials of our situation and the moral capacity to persevere in the country's cause unflinchingly till the ends were attained.

The Liberals realised that unless the nation accustomed itself to place national rights above individual rights, and individual as well as national duties, before both individual and national rights, a democratic government would be a veritable mockery. Hence the Liberals in their heart of hearts always believed that the foundations of a political democracy should be laid in a sound social system. This consciousness was always there in the minds of the Liberals; the political reform movement and social reform movement were practically one: but the fight was carried on two different platforms with a view to facilitate concentration on each. A reconstructed political system presupposed a reconstructed social system, and even if it were possible for us to get a democratic political system without democratising our social system, it would not carry us very far unless we used that democratic political system to reconstruct our social system. The President of the 27th Congress concluded his speech with the following words: "Let us constantly bear in mind that there can be no real or solid political advance without social advance and spiritual regeneration. So long as the masses remain steeped in ignorance and the depressed classes are regarded as untouchable, so long as the mothers of families and the mistresses of households are kept without knowledge in the seclusion of the Purdah, not capable of participating in intellectual pursuits or public matters, so long as class is divided against class, race against race,

and clannishness and sectional selfishness sway the actions of the members of the different communities, so long as true brotherly feeling and devotion to duty do not become the main guiding principles of our life, so long shall our aspirations remain mere dreams. It is only when Indians become a virile nation whose intellectual powers and practical capacities are expounded by knowledge and training, amongst whom the moral virtues of truthfulness, courage, faithfulness, industry and perseverance have been fully developed and whose whole life is dominated by patriotism and duty, it is only then that our beloved Motherland will become—

‘...the land that freemen till,  
That sober-suited freedom chose,  
The land where girt with friends or foes,  
A man may speak the thing he will.  
A land of settled government,  
A land just and old renown,  
Where freedom broadens slowly down,  
From precedent to precedent.’”<sup>215</sup>

The Indian Liberals thus deeply believed that the State as well as Society was an organism. Like all organisms, its various parts and activities were inter-related. Like all organisms, it underwent change in response to change in environment. But these changes, to be really useful, had to be slowly worked up into the body and the spirit of society. Any precipitateness, therefore, was bound to recoil upon the heads of the actors. The Government sponsors also pleaded for patience and for slowness of all change: but this attitude was often inspired not by any respect for the deeply organic character of Indian society, but by Imperial necessities. The Indian Liberals' attitude appeared to be similar but it was profoundly different. To them Indian society appeared to be a historic growth, not to be easily or properly manipulated at the will of impatient reformers into any or every shape. They did believe that it was not yet dead, that it had great possibilities before it in the future. They did believe that

the impact of the British meant one of those race and culture contacts fraught with great potentialities both for good and for evil to the East. It is the duty of the leaders of society in India to understand the value of the old as well as the new forms and to attempt the necessary changes in the old forms with a view to assimilate the best in both and then to recast the whole, in order that it might be fitted into the great process of modern civilisation. But these transplantations of institutions which they contemplated meant necessarily slow and cautious steps: because time must be allowed to let the spirit of the new civilisation sink into the soil. How could it be reasonably expected that a great society would cast off suddenly its age-long forms and adopt new ones? All reform, therefore, had to be evolutionary and not revolutionary and each forward step must be cautiously taken in order to avoid unpleasant reactions. This theory of society was at the basis of their political creed.

Nevertheless, they wanted things to move as rapidly as possible; and they desired that in all these transformations the State should give a very active and vigorous lead. Here their Liberalism had shaken off the old negative view of the liberty of the individual and the external relationship of the individual to the State. Their whole intention was to bring the State and the individual into as organic and close relationship as possible. They wanted the State not merely to keep the ring fence, within which the forces of unregulated individualism might have free play. They, therefore, attacked furiously the "laissez faire" theory of the Government and demanded that it should reflect the most advanced mind of the country in its economic and social policy, and so lead the rest of the country towards the goal set before it by its own highest political and social intelligence. The liberty of free exchange had meant disaster to Indian industry, and they wished the State to control this play of unbridled competition, which in the name of liberty was bringing ruin to the country. The State must educate, must organize, must lead and must weave into a coherent, powerful, well-knit personality all the scattered

forces of modern Indian society. But in order that the State in India might be duly qualified for this purpose, it had to be completely democratised.

The great task that faced the Indian Liberals was the reconciliation of this Indian democracy with British Imperialism. But they had no misgivings on this point. In their theory the one implied, and was indispensable to, the other. It is the Imperial ideal which formed the coping stone of their political and social theory. They were nationalists because they were imperialists and they were imperialists because they were nationalists. Their faith in the Empire was unbounded. They felt that the Empire at its worst would still be indispensable for the maintenance of the outer fabric of law, order, and civilisation without which no progress was possible. The country must be adequately safeguarded against chaotic civil and communal struggles and designing invaders from without. The *Pax Britannica* and all that it implied was vital to the existence and development of the New India. The influence of British administrative institutions and of British education would of itself bring about the gradual transformation of the country's whole social system. But the Empire at its best could work miracles. The State then would not be a mere agency for the promotion of order but an agency also for the fullest development of liberty and culture in all directions. The British State in India was no arbitrary freak or fancy of a cruel Providence. Its very foreign character was a blessing in disguise: it gave it that detachment, that vantage-ground of superiority over all the warring castes and creeds - Its Western character again was a positive recommendation; it made it the harbinger of the new light of science and organisation in the East. Its foreign and Western character served to bring India into active and fruitful contact with the multitudinous currents of the life of to-day. Its autocratic character enabled it to avoid being the tool of petty class or race influences in India. The Indian Liberals concentrated their energies, therefore, not on expelling the foreign government but on transforming it, so that without losing its foreign or Western or auto-

cratic character, it might yet be a real national government. The transformation of an Imperial government into a national government was the goal of all their ambitions: but they did not want it to lose its Imperial character.

What they prized most in the Empire was its modern progressive character. It was an embodiment to them not merely of order and peace and unity, but also of the ideal of liberty, of social, economic and political growth, of modern culture. The national ideal in India was not contradictory to the imperial ideal: it was the product of the imperial ideal. Whether the two ideals could develop side by side, each strengthening the other, depended upon the genius and statesmanship of the leaders of both countries. But the Indian Liberals would not easily give up their faith in the interdependence of the two ideals, because all their hopes and ambitions were bound up with it. The national ideal was born; but its further development required the fostering influence of the Empire. The moment the Empire withdrew prematurely without doing its work, that moment India might revert to the old life of petty religious and racial divisions. The Empire must be there to guard against India's escape into either particularism or solipsism. These were dreadful alternatives—the isolation of India and its plunge into medieval chaos. It was for the imperialists to see that the further stages of the growth of genuine Indian nationalism were insured till India attained complete political maturity.

Such was the vision which inspired and sustained the great Indian Liberals in those days, and who can say that it was not a beautiful and a splendid vision?





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